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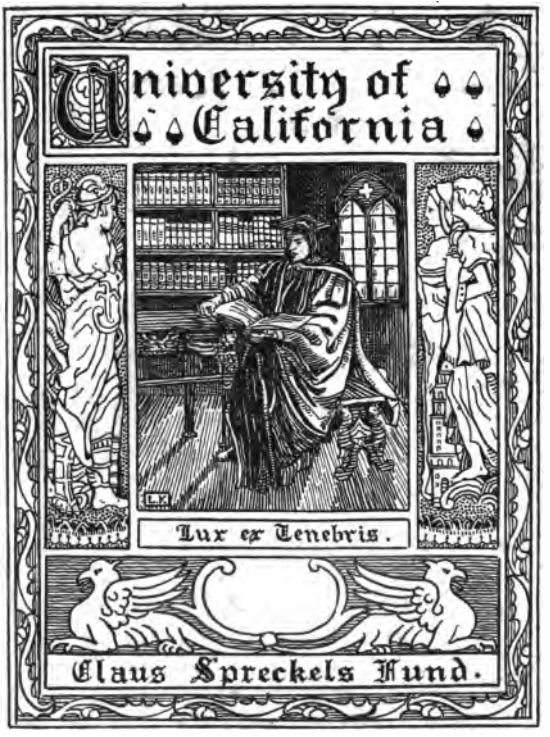
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THE UNEMPLOYED

A NATIONAL QUESTION

BY

PERCY ALDEN, M.A.

Late Warden of Mansfield House, East London; Member of the Mansion House Unemployed Committee; Hon. Sec. Guildhall Conference, 1903

WITH A PREFACE BY

SIR JOHN GORST, M.P.

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class of unemployable. There is every reason to fear that under our present arrangements this latter class is on the increase.

Mr. Percy Alden, the author of this work, is well qualified, both by personal experience and long investigation of the problem, to give the history of the various inquiries that have been made, and of the practical steps taken by other Governments than our own.[1] Some causes of unemployment can be ascertained, and preventive or palliative measures suggested. These are fully described and discussed in this book. But one cause no wisdom can foresee. In our complicated industrial system, changes suddenly take place in the demand for labour against which no foresight of the wisest Government and Parliament can provide. For such a contingency there is but one form of remedy—some occupation with an unlimited demand for workers upon which everyone can in the last resort fall back. Such an occupation is the cultivation of the soil—the first and the last resource of the human race.

JOHN GORST.

[1] He resided, as Warden of Mansfield House, for twelve years in West Ham—a borough inhabited by the worst sufferers from lack of work in winter. He was honorary secretary of the relief works there in 1893–4, is a member of the Mansion House Committee, and has recently visited the labour colonies in Holland, Belgium, and Germany.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

On returning from a visit last autumn to some of the Labour Colonies in Germany, Holland and Belgium, I was repeatedly asked to state my views as to the possibility of adopting certain continental methods in the treatment of the unemployed. I have felt it better, however, to widen the scope of the inquiry, and accordingly this little book gives a brief *résumé* of the practical suggestions which have been made. These I have systematised, adding a few of my own, as the result of fifteen years' experience, twelve of which were spent in East London in the neighbourhood of the Victoria and Albert Docks.

Any discussion of the effect Free Trade or Protection may have on employment has been intentionally omitted. The fact that has to be faced is that in all great manufacturing countries there are periods of trade depression, more or less severe, with a consequent increase in the number of the unemployed. This can be seen at the present moment by comparing France with

The complete change in the conditions of manufacture from industries carried on in the homes of the people often in small villages, to a factory system with all its accompanying evils, together with the decline of agriculture as a profitable industry, must be regarded as the main causes of the growth of the unemployed problem. The results are too well known to need comment, but they may be summed up in a few sentences. With the universal introduction of labour-saving machinery, and the aggregation of huge numbers of workers in the town, has arisen severe competition not only between manufacturers for contracts, but also between the men themselves for employment. The more severe the competition between manufacturers, the greater the demands that have been made upon the men, with the result that it has been becoming increasingly difficult for any except the young, the active, and the skilled to count on regular and continuous work. Highly specialised conditions of industry in many trades have placed the workpeople engaged in such trades at a great disadvantage in the event of a break-up in that industry, or even during a period of severe depression.

The strengthening of the Factory Acts and the Employers' Liability Bills, absolutely necessary as these reforms have been, have tended to shorten the years of full efficiency in the opinion of the employer, with the result that in times of depression consequent on a glut in the market, thousands

of surplus labourers past the prime of life, or below the average standard in some respect, are thrown on the streets, and compete with one another for the chance of a day's work in the docks or in any industry where casual labour is employed. The longer and more severe the period of depression, the greater the number of men discharged, all of whom tend to become demoralised and degraded by unemployment, some of them inevitably remaining as a permanent burden upon the rates.

The view held by the classical economists of last century and by a good many philosophical Radicals, was that the country for its own interests must have cheap labour power. The manufacturers contended that their factories would have to be closed unless cheap labour were forthcoming, and therefore all trades organisations were banned, and any attempt to provide work for the unemployed regarded as mischievous; In fact, a considerable quantity of surplus labour was regarded as a necessity. This view has only very slowly been displaced. It is still felt in some quarters that it is best to leave men to fight for their own interests, since the most deserving are sure to obtain employment, while the rest can, if necessary, be provided for by the Poor Law. The exponents of this view point out that the Poor Law has declared once and for all that no man shall starve, and they therefore are willing to leave the great mass of the unemployed with their wives and children to be dealt with by this authority as in the past.

work for them. Such men are rarely discharged without being told that they will be taken on again the moment trade revives.

In the next place unemployment itself frequently produces inefficiency. They are related as closely as poverty and drink. A large employer once remarked, referring to the numbers of men he had been compelled to discharge :—

"Between 5 and 6 per cent. of my skilled men are out of work just now. During the long spell of idleness any one of these men invariably deteriorates. In some cases the deterioration is very marked. The man becomes less proficient and less capable, and the universal experience of us all who have to do with large numbers of working men is that nothing has a worse effect upon the calibre of such men than long spells of idleness."

In this connection it is worth while noting the words of an expert in New York, the Warden of King's County Gaol, who in 1899 made this statement :—

"Men are constantly being committed here in large numbers who have been charged with no crime. Over 50 per cent. of the commitments of this institution are for vagrancy—the crime (?) of being out of work and homeless. I am convinced from seeing the efficient work of some of these men while here, that they never would be here could they have secured employment outside. *By our treatment of the unemployed we are making criminals of men who have heretofore been honest, self-sustaining members of the community*, and who would be so again could they obtain work."

Social reformers and administrators are agreed

that the Poor Law offers no solution of the unemployed problem. It is neither preventive nor restorative; it neither checks deterioration nor does it elevate those who are fallen into the ranks of the unemployable. In fact the Poor Law makes no attempt to give permanent help either morally or economically to the genuine unemployed. It is to prevent this process of demoralisation which affects not only the individual but the community that all the recent efforts on behalf of the unemployed have been made. So urgent has the problem become of late years that almost every winter has witnessed the calling of Committees and Conferences, the starting of Relief Works, and the issuing of special reports dealing with one branch or other of the question. London has naturally become a sort of storm centre with regard to relief work, and attempts have been constantly made to give employment which would lead up to remedies of a permanent character, and not be open to the objections that have been so often made against them. These efforts have been successful as a rule in proportion to the amount of time spent in preparing for them. Generally speaking, however, neither public opinion nor the local authority can be sufficiently aroused to enable action to be taken until distress has actually set in. The result is for the most part panic-stricken attempts to overtake the evil, and not the inception of well thought out and carefully considered schemes.

£3,000 was raised, partly by a grant from the municipal exchequer and partly by charitable gifts. Works were instituted upon Wanstead Flats, with the consent of the City Corporation. It consisted chiefly in digging and levelling the ground and laying down cricket pitches, the men being employed for four days a week, six hours a day, at 6*d.* an hour. The work was considerably more costly than it would have been if performed under contract, but the following facts must be borne in mind: In the first place, although these works would not have been undertaken under ordinary circumstances, the playing grounds thus created are still a valuable asset to the community as regards health and recreation. Secondly, a large number of the men were so physically weak that it was some considerable time before even the willing were able to do a hard day's work. These men must inevitably have received outdoor relief, owing to the congested state of the workhouse, but for the Unemployed Fund. It was far better that they should make some return of labour for the wages they received than take doles of food and money from the guardians and be thereby pauperised. It was about this time that Sir Henry Fowler, President of the Local Government Board, stated definitely that under section 12 of 59 Geo. III. c. 12:—

"Boards of guardians have power to purchase or rent land not exceeding 50 acres for any parish, and to open workshops for setting destitute able-bodied

persons to work, and to pay such persons reasonable wages for their labours."[1]

During the first few months of this same year (1895) a House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment sat to consider the possibility of giving satisfactory relief either in the shape of work or in any other way, with a view to tiding over the winter. The Local Government Board addressed a circular letter to the mayors of towns and the chairmen of district councils, requesting information on the following points:—

"(1) Whether there is any exceptional distress in the district, and how far this is due to circumstances peculiar to the locality or to the severe weather?

"(2) What is being done to meet the distress by public authorities or by voluntary agencies, and the average daily number relieved by each of the agencies during the week ended Saturday, the 16th February?

"(3) Is an unemployed register maintained, and with what result?

"(4) Have you any suggestions to make for the purpose of relieving such distress?"

The result of the inquiry went to show that in 454 localities, with a population of 10,381,607 persons, there was exceptional distress, due solely to the severity of the winter; and that in 154 localities, with a population of 3,722,372 persons, there was, apart from the want of employment due

[1] Several boards of guardians are at the present time considering the possibility of forming a group with a view to the purchase of farms from 150 to 250 acres, thus carrying out this section, but at present wages so paid would be parochial relief and involve disfranchisement.

in an appendix, the first and most far-reaching resolution being as follows :—

"That this Conference, realising that the interests of industry are the paramount interests of the community, and that the problem of the unemployed should be dealt with in a sympathetic as well as a practical manner, urges upon the Government the necessity of appointing a Minister of Labour with a seat in the Cabinet, one of whose duties it shall be to organise a special department of his office to deal with recurring periods of depression and distress, to watch for and notify indications of approaching lack of employment, to supplement the Board of Trade statistics, to obtain and disseminate information as to places where work can be had, to help in distributing labour where it is most needed, and, above all, to devise and promote measures for the temporary and permanent utilisation of the unemployed labour of the nation."

Following on this Conference a meeting was called by the London County Council of all the administrative authorities in London to deal with the lack of employment in London as distinct from the rest of the country. The committee, of which Mr. John Burns was chairman, drew up a report which was submitted to the General Purposes Committee of the London County Council, and adopted by the Council on October 27th, 1903. The report[1] favoured the expediting of public works, and urged that so far as practicable, such work be undertaken during the slack seasons. It recommended that works of a local character should be prepared which might usefully be carried

[1] See Appendix No. 3.

out during periods of distress. The report further suggested that the Government should take action in the preparation of schemes of work of a national character, in making the official Labour returns more generally known throughout the country, in adopting the recommendation of the Committee on Distress from Want of Employment with regard to disfranchisement following Poor Law relief, and, finally, in instituting an inquiry as to the duties of the Board of Trade and other Government departments, in view of the desirability of appointing a Minister of Industry.

In the winter of 1903-4 the Mansion House Committee made a useful experiment in connection with labour colonies. The report, which has been widely circulated, seems to point to the fact that the very best quality of men, especially trades union men, will not leave the town for temporary work in a labour colony, and that such schemes of work are, perhaps, more suited to unskilled and unorganised labour, where there is little prospect of any permanent employment. The important fact should be noted that there were only five trades unionists among the 467 men who accepted this relief work.

In March, 1904, a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Sir John Gorst, to amend the Vagrancy Act of 1824, and to facilitate the establishment of labour colonies. The Bill, which was not discussed, was entirely the work of the Salvation Army, which has been particularly active in this matter, although it synchronised with

only a small percentage of the unemployed, the present workhouse system must be abolished. The casual ward not only fails to be a solution of this problem, but actually encourages the criminal and the loafer who has no intention of finding work, by helping them to live without work.

We must differentiate between the genuine unemployed man who is in search of work, and the vicious vagrant who is in search of opportunities for plunder and who has not the slightest intention of working. The latter type is a danger to all peaceful citizens and a useless drain on the funds of the community. He has been so long neglected that his vices have made detention necessary for his own sake as well as for the sake of society. In dealing with him we must temper judgment with mercy, for nothing is more difficult than to discriminate between the sin of the individual and the sin of society that has caused a man to fall beneath the ban of the law. Nevertheless, just as strong measures have to be taken on the outbreak of some infectious disease, so it may be necessary not only to prevent for the future the increase of this class, but also so far as possible to remedy the existing evil by fixing periods of detention in labour colonies. The subject has come very much to the front of late, owing to the publication of the Vagrancy Report[1] of the Court of Quarter Sessions (Parts of Lindsey),

[1] By H. J. Torr, J.P., and Major R. A. Marriott. Published at office of Lindsey County Council, Stonebrow, Lincoln.

Lincolnshire, the Vagrancy Bill of Sir John Gorst and the Inter-departmental Committee upon the subject. The Lincolnshire Vagrancy Committee points out the great need for revising our present method of dealing with offences against the Vagrancy Acts, and especially recommends the establishment of such colonies in which the vagrant, as distinguished from the industrious unemployed, may be detained.

What, then, are the remedies for Class 1?

There are four which are worthy of consideration, which to be effective must be taken together:—

(*a*) The abolition of the casual ward.
(*b*) Papers of identification.
(*c*) Relief stations in place of the casual ward.
(*d*) A system of labour colonies, to which the Court should have power to sentence habitual offenders.

(*a*) *The Abolition of the Casual Ward.*—All the evidence that is at our disposal goes to show that the present methods of treating the vagrant are neither deterrent nor reformatory. Excluding the *bonâ fide* man who is out of work and is walking the country from town to town seeking for work, a very large proportion of those who enter the casual wards or who are committed for vagrancy are found to be habituals. Frequent cases have occurred in which tramps in the casual ward, even when threatened with prosecution, have refused to work, and because they have no fear of imprisonment, and sometimes openly avow their preference

the idle tramp cannot be said to be encouraged. The great advantage of the whole system is that it enables a workman travelling in search of work, either by the payment of a very small sum or by the performance of a small task of work, to walk from end to end of Germany in his search of employment, while every guidance as to where work is likely to be found is given to him on the road. If these relief stations could be established in England and papers of identification insisted on, and if these stations could be placed in regular communication one with another, there ought to be no difficulty in putting a stop to the wanderings of the type of man we have described.

(*d*) *Labour Colonies.*—By the Vagrancy Bill which Sir John Gorst introduced last year (1904) to amend the Vagrancy Act of 1824, it would be possible for vagrants to be committed for trial, and if convicted by the Court of Assize or Quarter Sessions to be detained for three years. If a vagrant consents to be dealt with summarily a court of summary jurisdiction is empowered to deal with him in the same manner. A justice of the peace is also empowered, if the vagrant wishes to be detained, to order his detention in a labour colony for twelve months. This Bill, with some modifications, should be reintroduced, though it is doubtful if it should be allowed to remain merely permissive. This is very much the process in Belgium, where the "juge de paix" has authority by article 13 of the Law of 1891 to order his

removal to the great Belgian penal colony at Merxplas, known as a "depôt de mendicité."

In Belgium vagrancy is not, strictly speaking, a penal offence, but it is regarded as so much of a social danger as to require special treatment. The methods employed appear to be much more strictly repressive than redemptive. M. Stroobant, who is at the head of this colony, stated emphatically that the object of Merxplas was repressive. To quote his own words:—"It taught men to work and to work regularly; it saved them from their own vices—the vices that had brought them there, but it did not seem to prevent them from going back over and over again." The colony compels men to work at agriculture, manufactures, forestry, and household employment. Soldiers conduct the agriculturalists to their various fields, although it is not very difficult for colonists to escape. This seems to cause no anxiety to the director, who says that if they can get work and are willing to do it, all the better, and that if they are unwilling to work they are sure to fall into the hands of the police and be returned again to the colony. Merxplas is practically self-supporting, and as the report of the Vagrancy Committee points out, there is no comparison so far as cost is concerned between the Belgian system and the casual ward system of England. Including the small wages that are paid to the colonists — and the wage system ought certainly to be adopted in England at a compulsory labour colony—and taking even

the aged and infirm into account, the entire cost is under £10 per head per annum, and the small wages will account for at least half of this.

In addition to the colony at Merxplas with 4,500 men, there is one at Wortel and another at Hoogstraeten, the three colonies between them possessing about 3,000 acres of land. The two latter colonies form one establishment and are known as "Maison de refuge."[1] They are not penal in the strict sense, and are tending to become rather the resort of the aged and the infirm. The number of colonists is greatly increased by severe weather. Hoogstraeten would have about 800 in summer and about 1,500 in winter; Wortel 450 in summer and perhaps three times that number in winter. Very few of the colonists are young men, and the conclusion to which we are forced —and with this conclusion both M. Leroy, the "directeur principal," and M. Stroobant, the director at Merxplas, agree—is that the genuine unemployed man is relieved outside the colony, and that almost the only men who are sent to the colony are professional beggars or habitual drunkards.

Belgium is not the only country that possesses this system. Denmark, like Belgium, shows little mercy to the tramp who is unwilling to work. For the respectable and industrious unemployed, for "the poor by impotencie" as they were called in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and for "the poor

[1] See Table: Types of Labour Colonies. Page 134.

by casualtie" they have nothing but the utmost sympathy and regard, but in a very effective fashion they deal rigorously with "the shiftless poore, the rioter that consumeth all, the vagabond that will bide in no place and the idle person." For them there awaits the *Tvangsarbejdanstalt* or penal workhouse. By the Law of 1891 the Poor Law authorities, acting in conjunction with the police, may send to the penal workhouse all who have been "guilty of breaches of order or of morals, or of disobedience, insubordination, drunkenness, quarrelsomeness, idleness, leaving the workhouse without permission, damage to property, or other irregularities, public or private." But Denmark is wise enough thoroughly to classify not only the unemployed but also the unemployable, and the moment a man shows himself willing to work and behaves in a quiet orderly manner, his treatment is improved. He is transferred to one of the upper classes and finally removed from the penal workhouses to the ordinary workhouse, where he is better fed and much more comfortable.

In Denmark, as in Belgium, workshops of all kinds are carefully organised. Expert managers and foremen direct the tailoring, shoe-making, carpentering, bookbinding, weaving, glass-blowing, and metal work which is always going on, and in addition there is a good deal of building, painting, etc. Thus a skilled artisan has no need to break stones, and, as in Belgium, he is practically no loss to the community. In 1902 the cost of Ladegaard

penal workhouse at Copenhagen was only 11*d.* per head per day, while the net profits amounted to about £3,900.

The penal workhouse in Denmark is not primarily, however, a paupers' prison. The idea is rather to keep out of harm's way those who live at the expense of their fellows—the professional vagrant and the bully who forces a woman to keep him. Such a man is detained for six months, and even then only transferred to the workhouse.

In Holland there are three colonies which may be described as penal for beggars and tramps, Veenhuizen and Hoorn, being for men, and the national workhouse at Leiden for women. The former is for vagabondage proper, while at the two latter habitual drunkards are also admitted. The present population of Veenhuizen is about 3,600, divided into three sections, and the work consists chiefly of forestry, agriculture, gardening, and various handicrafts, such as weaving, carpentering, masonry, smiths' work, and the manufacture of furniture, boots, and clothing. The colonist prisoners enjoy a certain amount of freedom within the colony, and have a very small allowance for wages.

In Germany the same type of man is treated at the "Corrections-Anstalten," the great majority of them being men of weak character, and irresponsible to a degree.

While not advocating the wholesale adoption of any continental system, the need for some alteration

in the law is perfectly clear. The class with which we are dealing is the very class which under our present arrangements makes the unemployed problem almost insoluble, because they discredit the industrious and honest man in the eyes of the public, and are themselves invariably the first to receive any assistance which was primarily designed for the willing worker.

What is proposed is that power to detain in colonies shall be given to magistrates in England, with due precautions and under all possible safeguards, and that for this purpose boards of guardians within county council areas shall establish colonies which will offer the opportunity of useful and honourable work on the land to a class of man who at present is a drain on the community and a real danger to its citizen life.

The great advantage that a farm colony would have over the casual ward system lies in the fact that the whole environment of this class of man is absolutely changed. In the first place he is no longer allowed his freedom after a few hours' work. He would enter the colony for a certain definite period, and his future would depend upon his conduct during that period. In the second place the work is useful and humanising, whether it be in spade labour on the land, in forestry, in the tending of horses, cattle, and pigs on a farm for the best and most skilled of the men, or in the manufacture of those things which are essential to the conduct of a colony on a large scale. It

should always be possible to provide a reasonable amount of recreation for these men. They might have their own band and their own library, and the nominal wage system might enable them to purchase such small luxuries as tobacco, and thus offer an additional incentive to men to do their best.

Some arrangement should be made whereby a voluntary committee of workers be allowed to bring the right kind of religious influences to bear on such men. The religious service at stated times, as carried out at Merxplas, has absolutely no effect whatever upon the characters of the men, and what is required far more is the kind of atmosphere which is created by the German Hausvater or the Salvation Army officers. After all it must be remembered that these men are not for the most part hopeless. Many of them are men of weak character, easily swayed and led by the baser kind. They need not permanently be unemployable, and it might be left to the discretion of the director, when real improvement is visible, to pass on such men to a free colony with the possibility before them of rising to independence and citizenship.

(2) *The Physically Weak and Deficient.*—For those who are through no fault of their own unemployable, every possible allowance should be made; and notwithstanding the fact that our workhouse treatment has changed for the better during the last few years, there is still room for improvement.

What is wanted is a system which would allow us to utilise to the full any powers that these poor men and women may possess, at the same time imposing upon them nothing in the shape of punishment or of stigma for that which is entirely beyond their own control. If once the casual ward were abolished this might be possible.

I have referred to the fact that in Denmark a careful distinction is drawn between those who are responsible for their condition and those who are not.

(*a*) *The aged*, and (*b*) *the weak and maimed*, are all regarded as a class apart, and have practically nothing to do with the Poor Law. For the aged, respectable poor, the worn-out workers, there is an old-age home where every possible regard and attention is paid to the inmates. It must be remembered that wages are low in Denmark, and that it is quite impossible for the unskilled worker to lay up anything for old age. All the more reason, then, that they should be well treated when the time for active work has passed. They are never allowed to become paupers, for the respectable aged poor are of right entitled to that relief in their old age. It is the business of the officials to make the lives of the worn-out workers as happy and comfortable as possible. In the Copenhagen Home, for example, the food is of the very best description, they are well clothed, and supplied with a fair amount of amusement, "a military band is even told off to play to them

in their garden, and there is a special theatre to which they are admitted free."[1] In England for a long time past we have been discussing the question of "old-age pensions" on the lines suggested by Mr. Charles Booth. It is to be hoped that we shall speedily follow the example of New Zealand, and institute a system by which the worn-out veteran of industry may be freed from the dread of poverty in his old age.

(*b*) For the *maimed* there should be special homes, with medical treatment. As persons "stricken by the hand of God," they are entitled to maintenance at the public expense. The same method of treatment should apply in other institutions to the *blind*, the *deaf and dumb*, and the *consumptive*. It is not much that they can do, but some of them could have instruction in light home industries—some occupation that would employ their leisure hours and prevent them from brooding over their misfortunes.

(*c*) The *epileptics* are in a parlous plight in England. Between the "Scylla" of an employer who dismisses them the moment he hears of their condition and the "Charybdis" of a lunatic asylum, there is no remedy for them but a colony like that of Chalfont or Lingfield, or better still, like Pastor Von Bodelschwingh's colony at Bielefeld. This colony of mercy, which is subsidised by the Government, has accommodation for nearly 2,000 epileptic men, women and children, besides

[1] Miss Edith Sellers, "Danish Poor Relief System."

500 patients suffering from other diseases. Every possible attention is paid to them, and no pains spared to effect their cure, while a spirit of contentment and happiness seems to pervade even the worst of the homes.

In England epileptics are too often left to the mercy of the world or driven into our workhouses and lunatic asylums, but it seems probable that, as a result of the Inter-departmental Committee at present sitting on the subject, a change will be made in favour of subsidising colonies like Lingfield, on the precedent of the Inebriates Act of 1898.

(*d*) As to the *weak-willed inebriates*, the best and almost the only remedy is removal from the town to the country, where, in a farm colony of the second type, working under healthy conditions at suitable employment, and under strict medical supervision, they may regain their strength of mind and restore their wasted energies.

In the German labour colonies some of the most valuable workers, both skilled and unskilled, are reclaimed drunkards. It is not enough to commit a drunkard to the inebriates' asylum; it is of the very essence of the cure that such a retreat should be in the country, far removed from temptation, in surroundings that are healthful, with work that humanises, and with the right kind of religious influence brought to bear.

So far as our present purpose is concerned, we may break up the unemployed into the following classes:—

1.—Those who are unemployed owing to dislocation in trade, the death of a trade, or changes in methods of industry, and are therefore superfluous in such trades.

2.—Those who are unemployed owing to temporary depression in trade, or a severe winter.

3.—Those whose labour is seasonal or casual.

Of these three classes there are many subdivisions which we may, for the time being, ignore. Both skilled and unskilled men are included, although in any attempt to find remedies for all three, we have carefully to consider those suggestions which are likely to employ the largest number of men. In actual practice it is impossible to draw a hard-and-fast line between the skilled and unskilled, however desirable such a distinction may be.

Before proceeding to discuss the more direct remedies, it would be as well to point out that, in the opinion of many social reformers, direct efforts are merely palliatives and afford no true solution of this complex question. The contention is that the unemployed problem is rooted in our social system, and can therefore never be directly attacked. Upon some of these indirect remedies we are all more or less agreed. Amongst a large number that have been suggested are:—

(1) Improved education and technical training.

(2) Legislative and other means of combating drink and gambling, both fruitful sources of individual unemployment.

(3) Effective trades organisation, especially for unskilled labour.

(4) Reform of taxation.

(5) The checking of the exodus from the country to the towns by such means as better housing in the country villages, better provision for old age, an agricultural post, local credit banks on the Raiffeisen principle, and above all by affording ample facilities for obtaining small holdings.

1. *Improved Education and Technical Training.*—Although there are a large number of skilled men out of work, yet it is quite possible that better technical and manual training and higher education all round would have enabled a greater number of skilled men to find employment—would have, in fact, enabled them to hold certain trades which have gone to other countries.

The importance that Germany attaches to such technical training is evidenced by the fact that the Kaiser and his leading Ministers of State do not consider it beneath them to make a long journey to some comparatively small provincial town in order to open a new technical college. The importance of education is so fully recognised on the Continent, and the opportunities are so much more numerous, that the English workman

that the demands of ordinary consumption are not able to proceed *pari passu* with the production that results. The object of the statesman should then be to make taxation tend to the greater distribution of wealth, *i.e.*, of power to consume:—

(*a*) By the taxation of large unearned income, especially such income as is obtained from the enormous growth in the value of town lands;

(*b*) By the taxation of big monopolies which prevent the wealth of the country from flowing into natural channels;

(*c*) By a progressive income tax which would also do much to prevent the growth of excessive and swollen incomes.

No. 5. The Checking of the Exodus from the Country to the Town.—The unemployed in the town have been in the past recruited from the agricultural labourers in the country, especially from the South of England, where the wages are low. A visit to the London docks is sufficient to convince one that side by side with the rural depopulation, there has been going on an increase in the number of casual labourers and of the unemployed. If, therefore, by wise legislation backed up by sound administration, we can check the rural exodus, we shall have materially contributed to the solution of the problem, or at any rate made it easier for us to keep the problem within limits. Country life must be made both possible and pleasurable. In the first place a sufficient supply

of houses for the agricultural labourers is required, and here the county councils with money borrowed at low rates from the Government should be able to supply the need. If necessary the byelaws could be relaxed and wooden or concrete houses built.

In addition to these very much needed reforms, he must be given the opportunity of either owning a small farm, or better still, of renting a small holding with absolute security of tenure, so long as he treats the land fairly and satisfies all reasonable requirements. The example of the South Lincolnshire and Norfolk Small Holdings Association, also of the Holland (Lincolnshire) and Norfolk County Councils might well be followed. State credit should be used, as in Mr. Wyndham's Purchase Act of 1903, to make it possible for authorities to get possession of the land. It may be necessary, as in New Zealand, to break up large farms into smaller holdings which can be worked by the tenants on co-operative principles. This subject we shall return to later on, but meanwhile let us say that Denmark again affords an illustration of how to deal with this question. About five-sixths of the land is occupied by peasants with small holdings, while dairy-farming on co-operative lines, encouraged by the Government, is pursued with almost unparalleled success. Of the total exports of more than sixteen millions a year, over fourteen millions are accounted for by agricultural produce, a large proportion of which is

Board of Trade, while the Commissioners of Woods and Forests and the Board of Agriculture are directly interested in rural industries. What is suggested is such a reorganisation of these departments as will render it possible to treat all distinctly labour questions from one centre. Reference has already been made to the resolution passed by the Conference which was held at the Guildhall on February 27th and 28th, 1903, regarding the appointment of a Minister of Labour, one of whose duties it should be to organise a special department of his office to deal with recurring periods of distress due to lack of employment. To carry such a resolution into effect is an extremely difficult and complicated matter, since it involves changes in so many other departments; but it is doubtful whether the problem will ever obtain adequate treatment until this course has been adopted. Failing this drastic measure, the irreducible minimum of reform must include a definite scheme in which a special department and the head of that department will be held responsible for the whole question of unemployment.

Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P., has suggested in addition a series of "elective administrative councils"[1] to undertake or supervise public works which have for their object the relief of the unemployed. He would propose to invest his councils with full powers to administer in whole or in part the Acts

[1] "The Unemployed Problem, with some Suggestions for Solving It," by J. Keir Hardie, M.P. (November, 1904).

that most affect the well-being of the agricultural labourer. To quote his own words:—

"The new councils to be invested with full powers to administer or co-operate with other like councils or existing authorities in administering, in whole or in part, the Allotments and Small Holdings Acts; the Housing Acts; technical instruction—having special reference to the training of both sexes in dairying, the rearing of poultry, fruit culture, market gardening, bee-keeping, forestry, etc., the powers presently possessed by boards of guardians for acquiring land and establishing industries for the employment on wages of the able-bodied poor; the maintenance of labour registries; and generally such further powers as may be necessary to aid in re-creating a race of peasant cultivators of the soil, including power to levy and administer rates and receive and disburse Government grants for carrying out any or all of their objects.

The new councils would be further empowered to acquire by purchase or lease waste lands for reclamation purposes and afforestation, and would be linked up with such departments of the Government as are in any way connected with the enforcement of any of the acts or powers referred to."

Whether councils should be elected for these specific purposes is a matter of opinion, but there can be little doubt that larger areas are required if the difficulties arising out of unemployment are to be dealt with in a less spasmodic and parochial fashion. The Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 is not altogether satisfactory, because it fails to include in London the extra-metropolitan districts like West Ham and Tottenham. Sooner or later the Act must be strengthened in this and other directions. Any scheme for London,

But it is not merely individual districts that suffer. Let us regard the problem for a moment from the point of view of official statistics, which will give us an idea of how it affects the nation as a whole. The figures furnished by the Labour Department of the Board of Trade in the *Labour Gazette* represent with a fair amount of accuracy the degree of distress prevailing amongst certain sections of skilled labour, but they do not give any clear idea of the number of the unemployed as a whole, although they indicate the directions in which distress is most likely to be found. Less than 600,000 men are represented in the returns of 225 trades unions made to the Board of Trade, and of these men we know that during 1904 there has been an average of over 6 per cent. unemployed. In any endeavour to ascertain the percentage of the unemployed in *all* trades, we must take into account not only the figures supplied by the Board of Trade, but also the figures—inexact, no doubt, but approximately correct—supplied by the secretaries of the unskilled trades unions, and also by those social workers who have been brought into contact with unorganised labour. Taking the official figures from 1893 to 1903, varying from 7·5 in 1893 to 2·4 in 1899, we have here a mean percentage of between 4 and 5. If we add to this percentage that which is gained by an examination of the statistics of unskilled unions and unskilled labour generally, we may safely infer that in any one average year certainly not less than 6 per cent.

of all the manual workers of the United Kingdom are unemployed. The number of wage-earners is estimated at between thirteen and fourteen millions, but this number would include women and some grades of labour not, technically, industrial, and therefore we cannot with absolute certainty draw any conclusion as to the exact measure of unemployment. It is probable, however, that something like three-quarters of a million of men and women are idle at the present time.

We might test this estimate by the figures of official pauperism, were it not for the fact that the Poor Law deals with a class which would scarcely be included. But if we take the Poor Law figures as affording some degree of guidance as to the amount of unemployment, we find that during the last three years the total number of paupers in receipt of relief, indoor and outdoor, has increased, and this notwithstanding the fact that the working class organisations, especially co-operative and sick and loan societies, are gradually extending the area of their operations, and are aiding the genuine poor to avoid the stigma of pauperism. The figures for October of last year (1904) show that the return of pauperism per thousand is higher than it has been since 1874 for London, and for the whole of the country.

To sum up the reasons which may be adduced in favour of some radical change in the Government Executive. In the first place it is necessary to make it clear that a definite department is

responsible for the whole problem; secondly, unemployment must be regarded as a national question and not treated as a local disease which affects certain districts during a hard winter or severe weather; and finally, official statistics prove that in times of severe depression nothing short of Government action is equal to dealing with the widespread distress for which the nation as a whole must endeavour to find a remedy.

2. *Municipal and other Local Labour Bureaux.*—One of the first measures of the Government department must be to insist that every town and city, and, indeed, every considerable local authority, shall have its own labour bureau, managed by a joint committee representing the city or the district council, the employers, and the trades unions. These bureaux must be carefully and scientifically planned for the collection of accurate statistics and for the provision of all possible information as to where labour is wanted or where work can be found. At present these bureaux are a hastily devised adjunct for relief work, started because the pressure of public opinion is so great that some works have to be set on foot. They are really unemployed registries and little more, as can be seen from the London County Council's report on "Lack of Employment in London." What is really needed is a "clearing-house" in each district, which not only registers the unemployed, but systematically classifies them after investigation, and furnishes the Government with

a statement of the numbers of unemployed, both skilled and unskilled, in the district under consideration, and finally, brings together employers in need of men, and unemployed in need of situations, in the briefest possible space of time. With all the information at their disposal the bureau could at least prevent good men from walking the streets for months at a time when work was really available if they only knew where to look for it, and if more was needed than mere direction it might provide in certain cases railway fares to other parts of the country where work was more abundant.[1] How far the few bureaux in existence fall short of the ideal it is unnecessary to state, but, compared with Berlin or Munich, London, notwithstanding the Labour Bureaux Act (London), 1902, has much to learn in this direction.

The German labour bureaux or labour registries are of seven principal types. Of these the most important are the public registries controlled jointly by employers and employed. They are of two kinds:—(*a*) voluntary association labour bureaux, and (*b*) municipal labour registries. But apart from the public registries a great deal of valuable work is done by trades union labour bureaux, the guild registries, and the travellers'

[1] See "London County Council Report on Lack of Employment," page 19; *Labour Gazette*, December, 1904; "Board of Trade Abstract of Labour Statistics" (1901—1902), pages 11—15. From October to December, 1904, about 48 temporary labour bureaux have been opened in London and the Provinces.

homes and relief stations. In connection with 466 lodging homes distributed throughout Germany, there are free labour bureaux, and the average number finding employment through these labour bureaux during the year is about 155,000. They are all in telephonic or telegraphic communication, and thus the very latest information can be given to the man who is seeking for work, and he can be set on his way with some chance at any rate of finding the work that he seeks.

(*a*) The voluntary associations are for the most part subsidised by municipalities and provincial governments, and some of them make a small charge to the workmen of 20 pfennig (2½*d.*), which is levied as a means of controlling statistics.

(*b*) The municipal labour registries, on the contrary, are nearly all free, but *in both cases the working men as well as employers are represented on the committee of management.* These labour registries are now federated in seven different districts or provinces, and there is a growing tendency to link them up one with another so that the area of employment may be as wide as possible. The federations aim at the exchange of experiences, the collection of uniform statistics, and a general increase in the number of registries. As to the results that have been obtained by these labour bureaux we may say roughly that while trades union registration affects about half a million workers in Germany, the remainder (nearly fourteen millions) have access to the public registries, of which there

are more than 100 in existence. A few figures are useful if only to show how sadly lacking in enterprise our few puny and inconsequential labour bureaux are.

Town at which Registry operates.	Number of		Situations filled.	Proportion of	
	Applications for Situations.	Situations offered.		Applications for Situations satisfied:	Offers of Situations satisfied.
				Per cent.	Per cent.
Munich (M.) ...	83,170	63,334	50,254	60·4	79·3
Berlin (A.) ...	54,595	41,552	32,697	59·9	78·7
Frankfort-on-Main (M.).	53,012	29,725	24,079	45·4	81·0
Stuttgart (M.)	48,206	37,174	22,828	47·4	61·5
Dresden (A.) ...	21,149	16,535	16,290	77·0	98·5
Leipsic (A.) ...	16,803	17,451	12,997	77·2	74·4
Freiburg (M.)...	20,947	12,605	9,883	47·2	78·4

(A.) Maintained by voluntary associations, but subsidised by municipality.
(M.) Purely municipal institution.

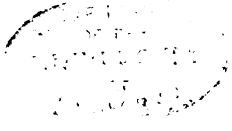
On an average the proportion of skilled labour, as placed, was about 50 per cent., and if women are excluded, about 57 per cent. To give just one illustration alone of the cost of running a municipal registry, we may quote the expenses of Munich in 1903, which amounted to £1,741, of which sum £1,164 went in salaries of the permanent staff. This works out at an average cost of 8*d.* per situation procured, or 7*d.* if we take the net cost after allowing for a grant of £225 from the Bavarian Government. Agricultural labour bureaux are maintained in different parts of Germany by the Chambers of Agriculture, but it is

generally being admitted that registries would not serve for purely agricultural purposes, but that "the general bureaux and their own affiliated branches should occupy themselves with the placing of labour on the land." Thus the urban bureaux in Bavaria, modelled on those of Munich, pursue a common policy "in endeavouring to provide rural applicants for situations with rural rather than urban employment, and in sending certain surplus urban labour into the country."

In France, free municipal registries have been in existence for many years, and the Board of Trade report of 1893 mentioned the fact that twenty-four labour registries making returns to the French Labour Department succeeded in filling some 11,000 situations, all permanent. In 1903 thirty of the French municipal registries reported that during the year 58,752 situations had been filled, but the situations found are generally for domestic servants, clerks, etc. On March 14th, 1904, a law was passed which enacted that:—

"In every commune there shall be established at the mayor's office a register in which shall be entered the offers of and applications for employment from time to time received, which shall at all times be open to the inspection of the public, free of all cost. In this register there shall also be entered a classified list of all such conditions as persons applying for employment shall think fit to annex to their applications. All communes having more than 10,000 inhabitants shall be under the obligation of establishing a municipal labour registry."

If these bureaux could be established everywhere in England and well managed, they would in time gain the confidence of employers and workmen, and both, as in Germany, should be represented on the committee appointed for that purpose. It would enable the employer who needs men to find the workers most suited to his purpose without going far afield. It would enable the working man—especially the labourer, whose mobility is not very marked—to obtain whatever work was going in the vicinity of his own home. Being in touch with other labour bureaux in all parts of the country it would readily supply the information that even the mechanic sometimes lacks, and being also in touch with the central Government it could at any moment, when distress became unusually acute, appeal to the department responsible for the problem of the unemployed for temporary assistance in connection with the larger schemes which, it is to be hoped, would be set on foot. Let us suppose a labour bureau in each big industrial centre, established on the most scientific lines, and possessing the confidence of the public. The immediate result would be that every man who wanted work and was willing to do it would have to register his name at the municipal bureau. Men who had no character or were unwilling to work would still be compelled to register, although they would be carefully classified. If they were unwilling to register then it would be possible by means of



legislation to deal summarily with them as idle and vicious persons. The labour bureau, in fact, would do two things. In the first place it would give us statistics, classification, and some means of identification; and in the second place it would act as a medium of communication between employers and employed, and would save the time both of workman and master. In support of this contention one or two remarks may be quoted of the late Rev. Wickham Tozer, of Ipswich, who was most successful in the management of a private labour bureau:—

"One of the most useful kinds of work which a labour bureau can do is to collect statistics. Say that you want to know how many men are out of work in Ipswich, I could tell you how many are in our books. If they are unemployed and have not attempted to make use of our medium of finding employment (which costs them nothing) they deserve no pity. The value of that to the municipal authorities is enormous. The moment there is any stir the authorities come to me and know the exact state of things. On one occasion of unusual distress we induced the corporation to find work, and found reliable men for the corporation by whom the work was done. *I consider the question of unemployment to be of national importance, and altogether too big for any private person to carry through.* It is greatly to be desired that institutions like this should be brought under municipal control. To make a charge would limit their usefulness. If supported out of the rates the bureau would be paid for by all."

In connection with the labour bureau it may also be suggested that the sphere of the *Labour Gazette* could profitably be extended if it

could act as an intermediary between the various bureaux, supplying the information which each bureau in its own district could utilise, very much as *Der Wanderer* serves as a medium of communication between the various labour colonies in Germany.

(3) *Relief Stations and Lodging Homes.*—One other direct remedy for all classes of the unemployed would be the formation of relief stations situated within a day's walk of one another, to facilitate the search for work, and to serve at the same time as labour bureaux for their immediate district. These relief stations are common in Germany. There is a network of over 1,000 "verpflegungs-stationen" supported by communal funds, in connection with the workmen's lodging-houses. Any unemployed man can get free board and lodging at such stations in exchange for a task of work, and be directed as to where he is likely to get employment, and where the next station is.

This system was introduced in 1854, and although the method of conducting the relief stations is not uniform throughout Germany, yet in all cases it does afford food and shelter and some direction and guidance for the genuine unemployed man. In Westphalia the conditions as to relief are strict, and work is always exacted in exchange for food and lodging, the cardinal principle being work in the morning and travel in the afternoon, though in cases of emergency the unemployed

(4) *Extension of Insurance against Unemployment.*—No attempt has ever yet been made in England, apart from the work of the trades unions, to insure against unemployment, but the achievement of these organisations is worthy of praise. Certain of the unions of skilled men make a definite charge upon their members which is in the nature of insurance against unemployment, so that when the period of depression comes, the union may be in possession of funds that will enable them to tide their members over a bad time. There are over 200 unions giving unemployed benefit, these unions being chiefly found in the engineering, iron, ship-building, building, textile, clothing and printing trades. As a rule the payments to the unemployed are graduated on a descending scale, but there is no uniform rule, and there is a growing feeling amongst trades unionists that a high scale of payment established at the outset tends to encourage the malingerer.

The highest rate of payment with which any society begins is 18*s.* (London Coachmakers'), the lowest 3*s.* 6*d.* (a union in the textile trade). At the present moment nearly 300,000 members are entitled to receive out-of-work benefit, and in 1901 the amount so distributed was £325,866. The following table will give an idea of the expenditure on unemployed benefit of the 100 principal unions in each of the years 1892 to 1903. The table shows that in 1903 the expenditure of these unions on unemployed benefit was a considerable increase on

STATEMENT SHOWING EXPENDITURE OF THE 100 PRINCIPAL UNIONS ON UNEMPLOYED BENEFIT IN EACH OF THE YEARS 1892—1903.

Year.	Building.	Mining and Quarrying.	Metal, Engineering, and Shipbuilding.	Textile.	Clothing.	Transport.	Printing and Allied Trades.	Woodworking and Furnishing.	Miscellaneous Trades.	Total Amount.	Amount per Member.[1]
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£ s. d.
1892 ...	31,729	7,638	190,070	44,623	2,605	6,097	25,598	9,244	7,265	324,869	0 7 2¼
1893 ...	40,030	62,435	251,461	47,200	3,544	5,907	26,514	12,140	8,615	457,846	0 10 1
1894 ...	53,794	26,638	260,619	42,227	4,226	3,272	34,717	11,808	9,947	447,248	0 9 8¼
1895 ...	52,345	68,046	192,305	49,111	2,901	3,505	30,274	9,898	7,148	415,533	0 9 1¾
1896 ...	25,099	42,896	113,032	34,747	2,400	3,091	27,835	5,734	6,553	261,387	0 5 5¾
1897 ...	24,216	24,877	194,610	40,638	1,995	5,357	24,995	6,736	6,308	327,732	0 6 2¼
1898 ...	22,249	13,735	107,610	34,238	2,121	17,779	25,668	6,773	7,296	237,469	0 4 7
1899 ...	24,277	10,247	81,512	26,909	1,379	3,017	28,310	7,050	4,631	187,332	0 3 4¾
1900 ...	46,355	4,419	93,822	60,030	1,638	3,612	35,410	9,985	5,384	260,655	0 4 6¼
1901 ...	67,228	17,727	134,743	44,114	1,721	3,480	36,296	13,892	5,662	324,863	0 5 7¾
1902 ...	73,804	18,876	204,725	55,521	1,357	3,385	37,214	16,014	9,415	420,311	0 7 4
1903 ...	80,802	18,020	224,043	112,510	1,516	3,590	38,407	17,045	8,281	504,214	0 8 10¾

[1] Based on the total membership of the 100 unions.

municipality. The office at present has a balance of £5,682.

The Leipsic experiment was only started in April, 1903, with a guarantee fund of £5,000, and up to the present no information is available as to the measure of success which has attended it.

There are two or three illustrations of insurance against unemployment in Switzerland :—

(1) *Voluntary Municipal Insurance at Berne, established in* 1893.—The premium paid is 6*s.* 7*d.* per month, and the amount of the annual grant made by the municipality towards the deficit on the working of the office was £528 in 1900—1901. The insurance fund is worked in close connection with the Berne municipal labour registry, and is under the control of a sub-committee of the committee which manages the registry. 380 out of the 597 persons insured reported themselves as unemployed, or 63·7 per cent. The financial basis is obviously not very sound. Municipal employees are compelled to insure with the fund.

(2) *Trades Union Unemployed Insurance at Bale.*—In 1901 the Bale Labour Federation established an unemployed fund on the following basis—membership to be open to all working men living and employed in Bale, whether trades unionists or non-unionists, the funds to be raised (*a*) by monthly contributions from members, (*b*) annual subscriptions from honorary members, (*c*) donations and collections, (*d*) grants from trades unions, (*e*) grants (if any)

voted from the canton; the amount of unemployed pay to be determined by the committee of the fund, jointly with the unemployed committee. No man becomes a full member until he has paid contributions for six months, and no one can claim unemployed pay until fifteen days after he has reported himself to the fund as unemployed. The number of persons insured with this fund in April, 1903, was 1,174. A subvention of £40 was granted.

Belgium.—At Ghent there is an unemployed insurance scheme under distinct branches for trades unionists and non-unionists, and the subsidy granted in the case of the trades unionists is proportionate to the unemployed benefit paid by the organisation. In the case of non-unionists it is proportionate to the amount deposited in a special thrift fund. No depositor is allowed to have a greater sum standing to his credit than £2. In 1903 the Ghent Municipal Council voted £600 to this scheme, which is now also in operation in three suburbs of Ghent, each suburb making a contribution. The number of trades unions affiliated is 34, with a membership of 14,616. There have been already serious difficulties, owing to great depression in the textile trade, while the non-unionist branch has proved a total failure. In the winter 1902-3 the committee administering the unemployed fund was compelled to make special arrangements owing to a great industrial crisis, but that difficulty has now been tided over,

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Belgium.—At Ghent there is an unemployed insurance scheme under distinct branches for trades unionists and non-unionists, and the subsidy granted in the case of the trades unionists is proportionate to the unemployed benefit paid by the organisation. In the case of non-unionists it is proportionate to the amount deposited in a special thrift fund. No depositor is allowed to have a greater sum standing to his credit than £2. In 1903 the Ghent Municipal Council voted £600 to this scheme, which is now also in operation in three suburbs of Ghent, each suburb making a contribution. The number of trades unions affiliated is 34, with a membership of 14,616. There have been already serious difficulties, owing to great depression in the textile trade, while the non-unionist branch has proved a total failure. In the winter 1902-3 the committee administering the unemployed fund was compelled to make special arrangements owing to a great industrial crisis, but that difficulty has now been tided over,

CHAPTER V.

UNEMPLOYED: THOSE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED OWING TO DISLOCATION IN TRADE, THE DEATH OF A TRADE, OR CHANGES IN METHODS OF INDUSTRY.

THIS large class of surplus labour consists of mechanics of a somewhat poor type, usually men who have passed the prime of life, agricultural labourers who left the country and have earned only a precarious livelihood in the town, men who have fallen out owing to the closing of a factory, or have been put off owing to the introduction of fresh machinery, and the thousands of unskilled and casual labourers to be found in London, and indeed in all our large industrial towns. Every fresh invention of labour-saving machinery means that some men must be put off. It may be many months before they will be employed again, and quite possibly they will never get permanent employment in that same trade. The labour-saving machinery introduced into the docks, the reorganisation on American lines of the English railroads, the mechanical stokers in gasworks, are illustrations of the change that is taking place every day in our industrial methods.

For these men it is clear that the creation of fresh industries, the revival of agriculture, or the reduction of hours of labour, or, finally, emigration, are the only remedies which can be suggested.

The remedies may be grouped as follows:—

(*a*) County council farm colonies, together with a system of co-operative small holdings.

(*b*) Agricultural training schools and farm colonies for town-bred men.

(*c*) Afforestment.

(*d*) Reduction of hours of labour.

(*e*) Emigration.

(*a*) *County Council Farm Colonies, together with a System of Co-operative Small Holdings.*—There will always be amongst the unemployed a certain proportion of men who have once been agricultural labourers. These men will usually be found amongst the ranks of the unskilled. It is impossible to say how many men there are in our large towns who have had some experience of the land, and are still "racy of the soil," but a large number are to be found in the neighbourhood of the docks—men who have been forced for one reason or another to leave the country, or have been tempted by the relatively large wages paid to the town labourer. Many men also on the outskirts of the large towns have had some experience of working allotments, and for this class of men, if willing to return to the land, one would suggest a system of co-operative small holdings. The Board of Agriculture or a newly

created department should assist the county councils to buy land that is going out of cultivation, and let it out at a cheap rate with security of tenure to those who wish to be repatriated. A county council colony might be established as a centre to which men would go in the first instance. After a period of probation, during which they could be thoroughly tested, a small holding of say ten or twelve acres might be given to each man, and sufficient money advanced to him to allow of the purchase of the necessary stock and plant. Only the best could be assisted in this way, but that there are such men in the towns is beyond doubt, and there is no reason why they should not be encouraged to return to the country. A select number of unmarried men should first be chosen, and all the conditions of success should be observed. Skilled agriculturalists accustomed to small farm work should be employed to give advice and instruction, and the probability is that in a comparatively short space of time these settlers will become entirely self-supporting. The Government has a magnificent opportunity in connection with the Congested Districts Board of Ireland, and recently the Scottish Office has taken a step which seems likely to be a far-reaching one in buying the estates of Glendale and Kilmuir in Skye for £95,000. The area of these two estates is nearly 70,000 acres, and at least half of these estates is occupied by 600 crofter tenants. These West Highlanders are fine, strong men, who ought to be kept on the

land at any cost. For want of proper training and teaching they are not good farmers, but a part of the business of the Government should be to arrange for instruction in more modern ideas and more scientific methods of agriculture, and if this were done there can be no doubt that such men could then obtain a decent livelihood out of the soil. To increase the number of capable and intelligent small-holders is the task of the Congested Districts Board. The Government should keep the land in its own hands, and these tenancies should be terminable only in those cases where inefficiency on the part of the tenant, or the general interest of the community, may make such a course expedient. In each case the termination of the tenancy would be followed by ample compensation for improvements. It is impossible to say what amount of such land would be actually required, but certainly not less than twenty acres should be the size of the holding if the tenants are to become absolutely self-supporting.

Mr. Alderman Winfrey and those co-operating with him have shown by their experiments in Lincolnshire and in Norfolk that the agricultural labourer is only too glad to obtain allotments and small holdings, and that if the conditions of success are observed the men will respond and get the best out of the land. Acting in conjunction with the county council, he has been successful in obtaining allotments for nearly 2,000 men, and very satisfactory progress has been made. In addition to

this the Small Holdings Committee of the county council of Lincolnshire have now let to men, in plots of from one acre to ten, over 650 acres of land. The rent has been paid regularly, the tenants have benefited to a very considerable degree, the movement from the land to the town has been stopped in that district of Spalding, and, in the words of Mr. Winfrey, "I do not think you want the relieving officer very often now in Spalding Common. He drives through every week, but he does not stop." Some of the evidence given before the Select Committee on Small Holdings which sat in 1889-90 showed how profitable an industry farming on a small scale, and under what is called "spade cultivation," may be made. One witness from South Lincolnshire submitted a very carefully prepared balance sheet giving his returns for seven acres over a series of years. In his worst year—a year of bad harvests throughout the country—he made a profit of £7 after reckoning all expenses, including his own wages at the rate paid in his district, and in one prosperous year his profits amounted to over £50. It is the same with the Norfolk Small Homes Association, which now has 339 acres let to tenants for these small farms, and there is no difficulty in obtaining 4 per cent. on the outlay, nor has there been any difficulty up to the present in obtaining a market for any surplus produce of these farms. Mr. Rider Haggard, in an article on "The Small Farmer in England," says :—

"In the neighbourhood of the town of Epworth, where the famous Wesley was born, and where may be seen the parsonage whence he was rescued from the fire as a boy, there are hundreds of acres of small holdings. . . . In summer they present a beautiful picture, covered as they are with crops of various hues. . . . None of these small-holders seem to be afraid of the winter, when the ordinary labourer is sometimes thrown out of work, or of having to come upon the parish for relief. Indeed, many of them prosper well, even in these days of narrow agricultural profits. Thus, near Epworth alone, I was told of twenty-three men now farming from five to a hundred and twenty acres, each of whom had begun life as a labourer."

These are only a few illustrations of what has been done, but if we care to go further afield—for example, to Denmark—we find that by her wise statesmanship with regard to the land, Denmark has not only materially checked the exodus to the cities, but during the last fifty years has to some extent produced a reverse current of population from the town into the country. The co-operative movement is largely responsible for this wonderful result. The Danish farmers and dairy owners have formed numerous co-operative societies for the collection, sale and export of their produce. The peasants have 400 co-operative banks, nearly all of them under their own management, and throughout the length and breadth of the country co-operative steam dairies, factories, bakeries and mills have been set up. About five-sixths of Danish land is possessed by small freeholders and peasants who are State tenants. Finally, Denmark

has within a few years reclaimed some 2,000 square miles of waste land, which had been regarded as almost valueless. What has been done in Denmark could probably be done in England.

(*b*) *Agricultural Training Schools and Farm Colonies for Town-bred Men.*—It is generally supposed that it is quite impossible to induce a town-bred man to remain on the land. The excitement of town life has unfitted him in the opinion of most men for any continuous work in the country, and the almost universal experience is that these men return once more to the town after a brief sojourn in a farm colony. This is due chiefly to two causes. The first is that the men have not been carefully enough selected in the first place, and that many of them are on the borderland of unemployable. We cannot, for example, expect the most satisfactory results from the type of man who frequents the Salvation Army shelter and is taken from that shelter to Hadleigh colony, neither can we hope that the majority of those who enter a casual ward will prove to be fit for repatriation. The first essential for success is a careful selection of men of the right type.

President Roosevelt in his recent message to Congres said:—

"Give every man who wants it a chance to get a home on the land. . . . We must seek to check the trend of population to the cities and turn it back to the land, and thus safeguard the nation against one of the greatest dangers that now confronts us in the maintenance of our social and political institutions."

In pursuance of this object, Commander Booth Tucker has brought a Bill before Congress asking for the creation of a colonisation bureau which will assist intending settlers; and meanwhile two colonies have already been established in America by the Salvation Army on lands granted by State Governments. The Army has spent £20,000 in establishing men, women and children in these colonies. The colonists were carefully selected, and are all self-supporting on farms which average about twenty acres each.

An illustration of how the town-bred man can be turned into an agricultural labourer is to be seen in the Dutch colonies not subject to State control, consisting of over 10,000 acres of heath and sand now under cultivation. The Frederiksoord colony, the best known, is situated near Steenwyk, north-east of the Zuyder Zee, and is one of three colonies, the other two being Willemsoord and Wilhelminasoord, with a population of nearly 3,000, all of which are conducted on the principle of helping the deserving unemployed with their wives and families. They are under the auspices of the Society of Beneficence, which was founded in 1818 by General Van Den Bosch, with the excellent motto of "Help the people and improve the land."

The colonists are admitted on the recommendation of charitable associations working in the big cities of Holland. They are nearly all unskilled labourers from large towns like Amsterdam,

any previous year. Nearly £84,000 was expended in addition to that paid out in 1902 for the assistance of unemployed members, the total amount per member being 8*s.* 10¾*d.*

Certain of the German trades unions also have an unemployed benefit for their members, statistics for which have recently been published in the *Reichs-Arbeitsblatt.* These figures seem to show that for the year ending March, 1904, with a membership varying from 213,962 to 446,712, £72,881 was paid in unemployed benefit, while something like £20,000 was paid in addition for travelling benefits to enable men and women to seek work in other parts of the country. This seems to show that the trades unions have, at any rate, made an attempt to cope with the problem of helping their own unemployed, and the real difficulty is that these efforts leave untouched the great mass of the unskilled workers.

Insurance against unemployment is to be found in several forms on the Continent, in Germany, Switzerland and Belgium. In Germany, two towns have made the experiment, Cologne and Leipsic. In the former city an office for insurance against unemployment was established in 1896. The rules have been amended on several occasions, but the object remains the same, "to provide, with the assistance of the Cologne labour registry, an insurance against unemployment during winter for male workpeople in the Cologne district." A man must be at least eighteen years of age, and

must have lived for at least a year in Cologne. The present rate of premium is 3½*d.* per week for unskilled, and 4¾*d.* for skilled men, and in return the insured workman receives, if out of work for not more than eight weeks in all, a daily amount which is 2*s.* for each of the first twenty days (not Sundays), and then 1*s.* on each subsequent day. These payments begin on the third week after the date on which the man has reported himself out of work. He must report himself to the office twice daily, and if work is offered he must take it, providing that the nature of the employment and the rate of pay, so far as practicable, are similar to what he has been getting while in work. If unmarried he may be required to take work away from the city. He cannot, however, be asked to fill a place left vacant in consequence of a trade dispute. On two occasions the executive committee found it necessary to decline to make any further insurance contracts owing to the drain upon their funds. In 1903 the number of persons insured was 1,624 and 1,501 remain insured; 1,105 received allowances, not more than a quarter of them being unskilled men. Towards the expenses of the office the municipality granted £1,000; the subscriptions of persons insured amounted to the same sum; honorary members contributed £152, and the interest was £269. During that year (1903), the excess of income over expenditure was £217, but this, of course, is entirely due to the large subvention received from the

Luhlerheim, near Wesel, under the management of Herr Siemon, it ought not to be difficult, after eliminating every bad element and selecting only the men who are both capable and willing, to make such training schools largely self-supporting. The very best of the men after one or two years of probation might be established on the land with a small holding as previously suggested, while the rest might be drafted on to the larger farms in the immediate vicinity.

Two or three small experiments have already been made in the direction of "Heimat-kolonisten" (home colonists), and the latest is at Freistatt, near Barrel, the newest colony started by Pastor Von Bodelschwingh. Only one family, however, is at present established. In 1886 an experiment was made at Friedrichwilhelmsdorf, near Walsdorf, about three miles from Bremerhaven, which was opened with twelve colonists. A report which appeared in *Der Wanderer*, November and December, 1900, shows that there were at that date thirty-one colonists in the institutions, but seventy-eight had only remained for six months. Four colonists are now permanently settled on farms of their own. In December, 1898, another experiment was made by the executive committee of the town labour colony at Hamburg. The committee acquired an estate of about 900 acres at Schäferhof in Holstein, and a considerable degree of success seems to have been obtained. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Labour

Colony Central Board, November 1st, 1903, a member of the board said that out of ninety-seven home colonists there were forty-seven who had returned again to this colony for the second time, all of whom had agreed to a two-years contract, and he went on to give a piece of most important evidence, which it is desirable to quote :—

"Whereas up till now the colonies have had a constant succession of inmates, who, on account of their want of strength and skill have been hardly able to do as much as one-half or one-quarter of a man's work, we have in our permanently settled inmates at our home colony at Schäferhof got together a set of workmen who have, so far, done really wonderfully good work. Our home colonists, who now number 100, not only do all the agricultural work on the Schäferhof estate of over 875 acres, but also, even in the first four years, when there were many fewer colonists, they helped us to build a big cow-house to accommodate beasts, a colonists' house with cubicles for sixty men, and a splendid greenhouse, which last, indeed, they built entirely themselves. Besides this they have, in the same period, put 113 acres of heath and moorland into cultivation, and have macadamised a length of 2,040 yards of field roads, which they carried out in an altogether satisfactory manner, and for which they broke up about 400 cubic yards of stone. In the last two years they have planted out and tended 7,854,500 saplings for other people, and 83,000 oak, fir, apple and pear tree saplings for the colony. We, the executive committee and officials of Schäferhof, give our home colonists unstinted and unqualified praise for industry, capability and good conduct; and we desire nothing more ardently than to be placed in such a position as would enable us to employ 500 home colonists at Schäferhof instead of 100 as at present, because we know that, in the surroundings of the home colony, not only would these men do a

municipality. The office at present has a balance of £5,682.

The Leipsic experiment was only started in April, 1903, with a guarantee fund of £5,000, and up to the present no information is available as to the measure of success which has attended it.

There are two or three illustrations of insurance against unemployment in Switzerland :—

(1) *Voluntary Municipal Insurance at Berne, established in* 1893.—The premium paid is 6*s.* 7*d.* per month, and the amount of the annual grant made by the municipality towards the deficit on the working of the office was £528 in 1900—1901. The insurance fund is worked in close connection with the Berne municipal labour registry, and is under the control of a sub-committee of the committee which manages the registry. 380 out of the 597 persons insured reported themselves as unemployed, or 63·7 per cent. The financial basis is obviously not very sound. Municipal employees are compelled to insure with the fund.

(2) *Trades Union Unemployed Insurance at Bale.*—In 1901 the Bale Labour Federation established an unemployed fund on the following basis—membership to be open to all working men living and employed in Bale, whether trades unionists or non-unionists, the funds to be raised (*a*) by monthly contributions from members, (*b*) annual subscriptions from honorary members, (*c*) donations and collections, (*d*) grants from trades unions, (*e*) grants (if any)

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of timber, and when we remember the great variety of industries in connection with the working of wood which would of necessity be set on foot in such areas, the whole question becomes one of serious importance. The estimates for planting and preparing the land vary from £3 to £8 an acre. The Congested Districts Board have found the expense to be about £4 10*s*. per acre, and in the opinion of Forest-conservator Howitz, the eminent Danish expert who was examined before the Eardley-Wilmot Committee in 1886, the undertaking would be profitable commercially.

Re-afforestation would undoubtedly develop other industries, improve the climate, protect mountain land from the denudation of soil and by arresting the rainfall gradually transform its character. Portions of the forest begin to give a return after three years. Osiers for basket-work are available in that time. In six years the thinnings of the forest would take place. In twenty-five years the forests would begin to give their full return to the country. Mr. Howitz estimates the probable annual return at from £1 per acre upwards, and he estimated that if the forests of Ireland had been properly protected and fostered in former times, they would now represent a value of £100,000,000. To prove that this is not an exaggerated estimate we may cite the case of the Landes district of France, which has added more than £40,000,000 to the wealth of France. This region forty years ago was one of

the poorest and most miserable in the whole country. It may now be ranked amongst the wealthy and prosperous.

In Scotland again, five times the amount of uncultivated waste lands might be laid down in forests, and M. Boppe, an Inspector of the French State Forests and Director of the French Forest School, has expressed his surprise that only 734,490 acres are planted with timber, and even such lands are unscientifically planted and managed. Almost every European country has given considerable attention to this great industry, and it is estimated that over 400,000 men in Germany are engaged in the work of forestry, while a very large number of both men and women are dependent on the subsidiary trades.

In this connection it is of special interest to note the suggestion recently made by the Lord Mayor of Leeds that some of the men out of work in the city might very well be employed in the planting of trees on the catchment area of the city waterworks. The *Yorkshire Post* in urging this experiment called the attention of the public to the experiment of Mr. Parry, waterworks engineer, who instanced the Liverpool afforestation at its water-shed at Vyrnwy, where 470 acres have been planted with 162,000 trees in five years. It is pointed out that every municipality might follow in the footsteps of Liverpool, as the planting of trees, apart from the fact that that capital is wisely invested, assists in regulating the

water supply, and tends to the purification of the water.

The advantage of afforestment is twofold. Firstly, it would enormously increase the wealth of the country, for our present imports of timber amount to nearly £20,000,000, apart altogether from the wood-pulp used for paper making; and, secondly, it would employ a large number of the unemployed, both skilled and unskilled, such employment being given not only during the summer but also during the winter, when the ordinary agricultural labourer is least busy.

Mr. Munro Ferguson, in an article in *The Independent Review*, calculated that this industry would support two million people. This may be an excessive estimate, but it is obvious that this new industry would have the effect of re-populating the waste districts and give a large amount of useful and profitable employment.

In the report of the Departmental Committee (section 9) we read: "The possibilities of forestry as the means of furnishing remunerative labour to an increased rural population are great."

It is, of course, obvious that only the Government could take in hand this work, a fact that was recognised by the committee (section 10), but nothing has yet been done to carry out its recommendation, and not even section 11, which we quote, has received practical application.

"In order that the country should be enabled to appreciate the extent to which a great rural industry

might be created in the national interest, and to clear the way for any effective treatment of the allied questions of the utilisation of waste land and the increase of the woodland areas, we recommend that the Government department charged with the collection of land statistics should take steps to compile a statement of areas presumably for afforestation in Great Britain."

Other conclusions of the committee are:—

"*Section 36.*—We recommend:—(a) That two areas for practical demonstration be acquired, the one in England and the other in Scotland, of not less than 2,000 acres, if possible, nor over 10,000 acres in each case. We suggest that the Alice Holt Woods in Hampshire be made available as soon as possible, to serve as a demonstration area in England, and that a suitable estate be purchased in Scotland, as convenient as possible to Edinburgh, for the same purpose. These recommendations would have to be carried out by arrangement between the Commissioners of Woods and Forests and the Board of Agriculture, and assistance should be looked for from local authorities, societies, and individuals interested in forestry and technical education."

(*d*) *Reduction of hours of labour*—The whole question of reducing the hours of labour ought not, strictly speaking, to be regarded in connection with the question of *unemployment*. This question should primarily be considered in relation to the question of *efficiency*. The real object of reducing hours is not to employ more men, but to make the men that are employed more efficient and more capable. An eight-hours day in certain trades has been proved to have this effect in a marked degree. The best workers are the men who take some

pleasure in their work, and this is impossible if the number of hours worked is altogether unreasonable. As a rule, a shortening of the hours of labour will increase efficiency, and so increase the power to compete with the foreigner. But it is a difficult question to decide how far under a system of competition this reduction in hours could be carried, for if the cost of production is rendered excessive, the sale and output must also be limited, so that a very large reduction of hours in certain trades might end in the defeat of the very object which trades unions have in view. There is, however, one direction in which a reduction of hours might be safely and profitably made, and that is in all forms of locomotion under public control. A considerable proportion of the unemployed might be absorbed if carmen, bus and tram men, and indeed all municipal employees worked from eight to ten hours. The London County Council, by shortening the hours of the men employed on the tramways under its control, increased their staff by 19 per cent., but their profits have increased at the same time. Every municipality that has not already done so, might with advantage follow this example, and for the rest there certainly should be some limit beyond which railway men ought not to be allowed to work. It is to the advantage of the general travelling public as well as that of the men themselves that the working day should not be unreasonably long. Perhaps we may be allowed to quote the passage dealing with this

question in the report on Lack of Employment by the London County Council (1903).

"*Section 18.*—If it is a fact that there does not exist sufficient work in the country to afford employment for the whole population, that circumstance alone appears to warrant a consideration as to whether the reduction of the hours of labour to a reasonable limit, in the interests of industry and labour alike, is not a matter of the highest importance. As an illustration of the effect of reducing to within reasonable limits the hours of labour in one particular branch of work, may be mentioned the action taken by the county council with regard to the employees engaged in connection with the tramways undertaking transferred to its control in 1898. When the tramways were taken over by the council the employees worked on an average eleven and a quarter hours a day, equivalent to sixty-seven and a half hours a week, and moreover there were no compulsory rest days, except in the case of drivers and conductors, who had one day's rest in eleven, but received no pay in respect of that day. The council in 1899 and 1900 introduced a system whereby all classes of the tramway employees worked only six days in seven, and further, the hours of labour were reduced to an average of ten a day, equivalent to sixty hours a week. These changes necessitated an increase in the staff of about 426, representing an increase of 19 per cent. Since 1900 the undertakings of the two other companies have been acquired by the council. The companies employed 355 men, and to place these on the council's conditions involved the employment of 74 extra men—an increase of 20 per cent. The application of this process of reduction of hours, where practicable, and the absorption into each overworked trade of its own surplus unemployed, is the easiest method of providing work for the unemployed. This process has, to a certain extent, been in operation for the past few years, as will appear from the figures quoted in the Board of Trade's labour statistics, which

show that from 1894 to 1901, 354,859 workers obtained a reduction of their hours of labour, amounting on an average to about four hours per week each."

(*e*) *Emigration.*—As to the question of emigration, there can be no doubt that for the individual, with proper training and under Government guidance, emigration is a remedy for unemployment, but it can scarcely be recommended at the present moment in any other trade besides that of agriculture, and it seems quite possible that with the same expenditure of money and time a man who had some knowledge of the methods of agriculture and would be capable of working on a Canadian farm, might be established on a small holding in England. It is unfortunately too often the case that the best men are emigrated, and while it is a satisfaction to them, and perhaps to us as individuals, that they should be established firmly and securely in our colonies over the seas, it is undoubtedly a real loss to England that the very best of her sons should be taken out of the country, while the worst, whom the colonies are not willing to receive, should be left upon our hands. If emigration is to be encouraged, it should be on the lines that have been briefly indicated. An arrangement should be come to between the British and Colonial Governments whereby a somewhat lower grade of man could be taken to the colony and temporarily employed on State farms, where he could be taught and trained, eventually taking his place as a small farmer in the Western States

CHAPTER VI.

THOSE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED OWING TO TEMPORARY DEPRESSION IN TRADE, OR TO SEVERE WEATHER DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

AMONGST the remedies suggested for these large classes of unemployed labour are the following:—

1. The reclamation of waste lands and special afforestment works.

2. The improvement of the canal system.

3. Local relief works by city councils, county councils, and voluntary relief committees.

4. Re-arrangement of work by local authorities.

5. Labour colonies and Poor Law farms.

(1) *Reclamation of Waste Lands by the Board of Trade.*—The Board of Trade has power to reclaim foreshores (under the Foreshores Act of 1866), and several experiments have already been made. The low-lying tidal lands along the estuaries of many of our rivers, and frequently the land near the sea coast in counties like Essex, would be a valuable asset to the Government if suitably reclaimed and improved. This reclamation work might be partly permanent and partly temporary in accordance with the need, certain portions of it being reserved for winter distress,

and the rest made the basis of a permanent settlement scheme.

The Wash affords one of the best opportunities for commencing such work, and is really a far less serious undertaking than the reclamation of the Zuyder Zee, which the Dutch Government has undertaken. A scheme was formulated by the celebrated engineer, Rennie, for reclaiming the Wash, which would have added a new county of 200,000 acres to England, but although the scheme was commenced and some work done under it, its progress was blocked by the owners of foreshore rights, a difficulty that could partly be removed by the Board of Trade. In 1814, the work done under a practical scheme in the East Fen and Wildmore showed that the—

Total acreage of improved and drained lands accomplished was	60,481 acres
Improved rental of which (at from 20s. to 50s. per acre) was valued by Mr. Bower at the annual value of	£119,561
Less capital expended on reclamation, £580,705, at 5 per cent., making annual charge per annum of	£29,035
Leaving net improved annual value of ...	£81,526

which, at thirty years' purchase, gives a net increased capital value of £2,445,780. The land reclaimed, which was formerly washed by the sea at every tide, is now covered with rich corn-fields and comfortable farmsteads. A similar experi-

ment was made at Pitfore, on the banks of the Forth, 250 acres of land being reclaimed and the outlay being repaid in less than ten years. To-day this land is some of the most fertile in the country. Another instance can be found on the banks of the Tay, in Perthshire, where 63 acres were reclaimed at the rate of £24 an acre. So rich was the soil that no manure was required for nine years.

The Dutch Government, it will be remembered, fifty years ago reclaimed the whole of Haarlem Lake, consisting of 45,000 acres. The cost was £19 per acre, and the land sold at this price to purchasers, who were readily found. The Dutch Government is now pumping out the Zuyder Zee at a cost of £18 per acre. It expects to sell the land so reclaimed, 476,000 acres, at £34 per acre, but even if this expectation is not realised, there can be no doubt that the returns will more than cover the capital expended on this daring enterprise.

The Port of London would be immensely improved by foreshore reclamation. The Royal Commission recommended the expenditure of 2½ millions sterling on improving the Thames from the Nore to the Albert Dock, chiefly by dredging. Such dredgings, instead of being deposited in the sea or deeper parts of the river, should, in accordance with the evidence given before the Lower Thames Navigation Commission (1894-96), be used to reclaim the foreshores (sections 39, 40, 41), thus giving occupation to large numbers of unskilled

labourers. It has often been pointed out by Mr. Will Crooks that there are large portions of the Thames foreshores in London itself between Woolwich and Hammersmith which would certainly pay for being reclaimed. He has instanced the public garden, a quarter of a mile in length, which Fulham has created out of the Thames foreshore at a cost of £33,000, a site which would now be worth four or five times that amount. The wish is father to the thought in many cases, and the practicability becomes assured just because it seems so desirable an object; but no one doubts the importance of improving the Port of London, which might be the finest in the world, nor does anyone question the fact that a large amount of unskilled labour might well be employed in giving increased facilities to shipping, in improving the navigability of the Channel and beautifying the banks of the River Thames.

While afforestment may be regarded as the permanent work of a special Government department, it would be quite possible to set aside certain areas which could be suitably planted and worked at such times as a sudden depression in trade largely increased the number of the unemployed. What is wanted is something like the machinery already existing in India to meet the contingency of a famine, so that the moment the distress becomes acute, and excessive unemployment has been demonstrated in any one district, any suitable land within reasonable distance of the town may

be utilised for this purpose. Such land should be left for emergencies, while the chronically unemployed could be established and set to work on tracts much more remote.

(2) *Improvement of Canals.*—There is an immense amount of local work which might be done in the improvement of our inland water-ways. The right course to take would seem to be for the Government to nationalise all the canals of the United Kingdom, of which there are 4,000 miles. If this were done, it would be possible, by granting subsidies to the authorities for improvement purposes, to encourage the use of these great public highways, and afford at the same time an outlet for unemployed labour. As compared with the Continent, we are sadly lacking in enterprise, for it is no uncommon thing to find in Holland or Germany that the canals can take boats up to 1,000 tons, while in England the great majority of the canals will only accommodate barges from 18 to 60 tons.

Our inland water-ways carry about 30,000,000 tons annually in all goods, while the railway carriage of minerals alone is over 300,000,000 tons. But when we remember that 1,200 miles of canal are owned or controlled by railway companies, the explanation is not far to seek. This in itself would be a sufficient argument for Government control, but there is the additional reason that, like forestry, the work of deepening, broadening and improving the canals is, in the opinion of men

on such works, and raising an outcry on the part of the ratepayers. To avoid this, the London County Council report makes the following suggestions :—

"The wages of men employed upon relief works are chiefly relief, being given primarily for the sake of the recipients. Under certain circumstances they may become true earnings. Inquiry, piecework, and short, but daily regular hours are the means taken for preventing the subsidence of labour upon relief works."

Government Relief Works.—The first and perhaps the most notable illustration of Government relief works was afforded by the attempt to employ the unemployed during the great cotton famine. The work done was chiefly sewage and street improvement. It is somewhat ancient history, but a statement in the report on the unemployed is suggestive :—

"The moral effect of the work was very valuable in its influence on the unemployed population. This experiment in Lancashire ought to inculcate a lesson for future use, viz., that unskilled men may soon be taught the use of tools where practicable means are found to furnish employment."

Mr. Rawlinson, who was responsible for the organisation of the works under the Public Works Act, reported that many of the men selected themselves into gangs, and contracted for trenching and sewering, street after street, to the satisfaction of themselves and to the satisfaction of their employers. The entire cost for thirteen towns

was £545,305, of which £226,886 was paid in wages.

A similar instance of Government relief works is to be found in New Zealand in connection with the Bureau of Labour, which was originated in 1891, when the Hon. W. B. Reeves was Minister of Education and Industry. Two hundred agencies or labour bureaux were established, and the utmost pains were taken in filling up the forms to guard against imposture. The Government bureaux rendered help in four ways; first, by employing manual labourers in the various public departments, especially those of lands and public works; second, by sending men to private employers where work was known to be wanted; third, by giving passes on the State railways to districts in country places where there was a fair prospect of getting work, although the cost of such free passes was always deducted when Government employ ment was found; and fourth, by selecting men for special relief works put in hand to meet particular emergencies, controlled sometimes by the Government, sometimes by municipal authorities, and occasionally by voluntary unemployed committees. In the bad seasons of 1894 and 1895 the Government subsidised a good many towns where useful works were started. The cost of such public works was thus met, partly by the Government, partly by the municipal authority, and partly by voluntary subscriptions. During the five years 1891 to 1896, the New Zealand Bureau of

Industries employed 8,981 men on Government relief works, and sent 5,139 men to private employers. The best of the New Zealand work was done by gangs of men working on the co-operative system, and Mr. Reeves is evidently of opinion that careful classification should be enforced, and the best men employed.

"I am bound to express my conviction that paying time wages to inferior men on relief works or public works never has answered, and is never likely to answer. If the wages are very low, the result is cruelty; if they are normal, money is wasted. Piece-work at fairly liberal rates is much more likely to survive the sort of public criticism which comes in a storm when one of their periodical fits of economy seizes colonial tax-payers."

The system is thus described:—

"The new system is that of constructing roads and railways by what are called co-operative contracts. In these, a small party of men, generally six in number, is allotted a certain section or length of road or line; one of them is elected a 'ganger' and trustee for the others, to deal for them with the Government. The Government engineer states a price for the portion of work, and, as this is done by an unprejudiced officer, it is generally accepted without murmur by the men."

Progress payments are made fortnightly, for the benefit of the men's families, and the whole amount is paid up in cash on the work being passed by the engineer.

Municipal Relief Works.—The instances of municipal relief works during periods of severe distress

are too numerous to mention, but they do not all comply by any means with the conditions that have been laid down. The usual method is to open a registry at the town hall and enter the names of all who choose to say that they are unemployed. Some investigation, far from searching, is instituted as to the length of time the applicant for work has been a resident in the neighbourhood. The general rule is to insist upon at least a six months' residence. The work given is chiefly road-making and sewering, stone-breaking and road-sweeping, the improving of parks and open spaces, the digging of ballast and sand, the painting of public buildings, etc.

Both in France and Germany such municipal relief works have been common. An inquiry published by the French Labour Department relating to the years 1890-95, and confined to towns with a yearly budget of at least £4,000, states that "in 22 departments no such town had organised any relief works. In 41 towns, distributed between 24 departments, the works instituted consisted only in the removal of snow and ice and only aged or infirm men were employed; 114 towns, distributed between 54 departments, had organised relief works of different kinds, carried out at various seasons of the year. The amount expended on these relief works in five years by the 114 towns in question was £196,150," an average of £39,230 per year. In 1902 in 60 departments municipal relief works were organised, and 57

have made returns showing an expenditure in all of £66,994.

During the last two winters over 100 local authorities in England have established works which may be roughly described as relief works, though in some cases it merely means the expediting of works which would have otherwise been taken in hand later in the year. Upon these undertakings many thousands of men have been employed, but it is quite safe to say that the local authority has on the average found it impossible to engage more than one-fourth of those making application. About 30 of these authorities are Boroughs or Urban District Councils in London and the neighbourhood, all of them possessing a population of 50,000 and over.

Relief works, if they are to be successful, should be necessary and productive, and the men, instead of being taken haphazard, should be carefully selected for their fitness to do this class of work.

In November, 1904, a special committee of the Charity Organisation Society published a report on relief from distress due to want of employment, most of the evidence being taken from the relief works of last winter. It is an advance on any position that the Charity Organisation Society has yet taken up, and many of their recommendations are of value. On the whole the committee approves of the work of the Mansion House Fund of last year, although even in that case a few criticisms are made. The committee disapproves of any attempt on the part of the borough councils

to provide employment except in so far as they can add to their staff in the usual course of their work. The committee feels the utmost apprehension with regard to the scheme of the President of the Local Government Board because it represents:

"The acceptance on the part of the State of an obligation to provide employment relief practically to all comers; and the development of this position must inevitably lead to the creation of a large new organisation, the attractions of which will divert the people more and more from finding the means of maintenance in the better organisation of industry and in the growth of independence. They venture to hope, therefore, that this part of the President's scheme may be reconsidered and modified."

Again, in section 10 of their general conclusions:—

"Hence the supply of employment by the public authorities is likely to have the old results, to impede the circulation of labour, to interfere with the development of any sufficient organisation of industry on lines independent of State aid or State relief, and to make the people less resourceful and vigorous. While it may be desirable to adopt many expedients to meet passing difficulties, it would, it seems to the committee, be little less than a national disaster if in the metropolis methods were adopted as permanent which would by slow degrees lead the people back to a new serfdom such as that which prevailed in the beginning of the last century, a serfdom to be enjoyed no doubt under new alleviations, but none the less fatal to their social morality and their energy."

Summed up in a word the attitude of the Charity Organisation Society is that public relief works should only be set on foot as a last resort to

keep the better class working man from living in semi-starvation, and even then in its opinion the tendency is to keep labour in the same grooves. If the distress is merely temporary, "after a short period there will be an improvement in the labour market: if the distress is occasioned by deeper and more permanent causes, public works will act merely as a palliative which may divert attention from the source of the evil and tend to become as chronic as the shortness of work."

The weakness of this position is very obvious. The Charity Organisation Society takes it for granted that labour is sufficiently mobile to justify its being left to find work for itself in the ordinary channels, whereas experience has shown a great lack of mobility, especially in large towns, due not so much to any sapping of independence by Poor Law administration as to the lack of machinery whereby the unskilled labourer without funds can find his way to some district where work is more plentiful. Very little stress indeed is laid by the Charity Organisation Society in this report on the necessity for this machinery in all parts of the country. For the skilled men there is some guidance through their trades organisations; for the unskilled there is not that reliable information and that wise counsel which a Government and local authorities alive to the importance of the problem ought to place at their disposal. As to the argument that public works will act merely as a palliative, directing attention from the source of

the evil, supposing that the distress is occasioned by more permanent causes, the reply is, first, that the Charity Organisation Society's methods of relief are only palliatives, and the members of that society would be the very first to protest against any industrial reorganisation or social reconstruction, which really attacked the roots of the evil; and second, that the institution of public works, to which both the ratepayer and the taxpayer are required to contribute, is one way, and perhaps the only way, of calling the attention of the Government and the municipalities, through the electorate, to the deeper and more permanent causes of unemployment, to which reference has been made. In this connection it might be as well to quote from a letter from Mr. George Lansbury, a member of that committee, at the conclusion of its sittings. Mr. Lansbury writes:—

"I have now had time to consider the report carefully, and regret that I must ask you to say that I dissent from it, mainly on questions of principle such as the reasons which have led to increased pauperism in places like Poplar and West Ham. What is said I agree with as a statement of reasons which have operated to accentuate the evil, but I do not at all agree that we have created the evil. This lies far deeper in our individual life than any question of Poor Law administration."

It has already been pointed out a district like West Ham cannot be said to be wholly responsible for the enormous mass of congested poverty to be found within its borders. There are several

well-known causes for its existence—firstly, the fact that West Ham receives the ebbing tide of the overcrowded and poverty-stricken districts of East London; and secondly, the flowing tide of agricultural labourers and unskilled workers from the country districts of Essex and the provinces. Many of these men are attracted not by the supposed weakness in the administration of the Poor Law guardians, for they know little or nothing whatever about the guardians, but by the fact that casual labour can be found in the docks, and also by the proximity of the large factories along the North Woolwich Road; many are also tempted by the Beckton Gasworks, the Thames Ironworks, and Woolwich Arsenal, to settle in Canning Town. Wherever unskilled labour is required in large quantities, and especially where casual labour is employed, a rather low type and quality of man will be attracted; but to say that West Ham is responsible for such a situation is really to make it responsible for the whole industrial system of which West Ham is only a type. We may all agree that municipal relief works are not a sufficient solution of the problem—that they are, in fact, a necessary evil—but when we have accepted that position there is nothing left for it but a resolute demand for some form of Government interference which shall make a congested and poverty-stricken area like West Ham an impossibility.

Notwithstanding this criticism, we may heartily approve in the main of the recommendations made

by the committee with regard to terms of employment, etc., *if* public works are set on foot :—

"(1) Men should only be admitted to them after inquiry, or on satisfactory recommendation.

"(2) The wages and the hours should be as nearly as possible according to contract rates.

"(3) Care should be taken to supply sufficient overlookers, and to group the men according to character and ability.

"(4) If a meal is wanted, or clothing, it is better that this should be supplied separately from a relief fund. The employment should be given, as far as possible, in accordance with ordinary business contracts, and not as 'charity work,' which tends to be as ill-done as it is ill-paid, and to degrade men instead of improving them.

"(5) Public and other relief works should be of a local character, planned according to estimates drawn by the local authorities, and conducted under local superintendence. This will be some guarantee against waste and irresponsibility. Such works only should be undertaken as are likely to create the least disturbance in the labour market."

It cannot be too much emphasised that to employ a man who is a well-known loafer of thoroughly bad character upon such work is to court failure, but it is equally a mistake to employ men who are altogether unaccustomed to manual labour, or the physically defective—men with weak lungs or a weak heart. The unemployed, when once selected, should work under good superintendence, and be paid at the trade union rate of wage, or, as an alternative, they may possibly be grouped in co-operative gangs as in New Zealand,

allowing these same gangs to take contracts for certain portions of the work done. If these relief works can be of such a nature as will tend to improve the public health, or add to the beauty of the town, especially if it be such work as would otherwise not have been undertaken, they would then be very far from an unmixed evil, and in any case, until the Government has recognised its responsibility, there is little else to be done.

Voluntary Unemployed Committees, such as the Mansion House Committee, are able to do work that the local authority is not in a position to do. The relief works carried out by the Mansion House Committee during the winter of last year (1903-4), afford just that differentiation which is required for the type of man the local authority is not sure about. By taking the unemployed away from London, and putting them to work for a fortnight, or in the latter instance for a month at a time at the Hadleigh farm colony and the new colony at Osea Island, it was considered by the promoters of the scheme that they were obviating the risk of being imposed on by men who were loafers or wastrels. This to a very large extent was the case, although at the same time the conditions made it almost impossible for the best class of the unemployed to accept the assistance offered. Notwithstanding the large number of trades unionists out of work, only five were actually members of such unions out of 467 men relieved,

which in itself is a sufficient proof that relief work in colonies is not adapted for the highest type of unemployed. It did, however, fulfil the purpose of assisting a large number of unskilled and unorganised men, and afforded at the same time some valuable experience which will be a guide in the future. The work was given only to men with families, who were resident in certain defined districts. The men were not paid in the shape of money, but the money was given to the wives in London while the men themselves received a small allowance of tobacco. The work consisted chiefly, at Hadleigh, in digging and removing clay, in trenching and ditching, repairing a sea-wall, making a railway embankment and a new road; at Osea Island, in cleaning out a ditch and repairing, building a sea-wall, in driving piles for a wharf, in making half a mile of roadway, and helping to excavate 382 yards of sewer trench. The men were well fed and provided with clothes, and gradually improved in physique while at work. A few have been emigrated to Canada—sixteen in all. Of the remainder, it is almost impossible to say what permanent effect the work will have upon them. This much, however, is sure, that some of them were tided over a very hard time, and were, no doubt, more easily able to get work on return to London. Fifteen men stayed as long as fourteen weeks, but the average stay was about a month. The total cost, including capital expenditure, both at Hadleigh and Osea Island, was

£4,350. A *résumé* of the recommendations of the committee will be found elsewhere (Appendix No. 4).

(4) *Re-arrangement of Work by the Local Authorities.*—So far as this is at all possible, it is a comparatively simple matter. There are, however, many public works that cannot be delayed and must be carried out as speedily as possible under the best conditions. No surveyor or engineer could otherwise cope with the extraordinary growth of public work in connection with any large municipality. If he were to postpone carrying out such works until the winter, he would, in the first place, run the risk of being stopped altogether by the frosts, and this, in the case of building and important sewage operations, would be fatal. In the second place he might even be intensifying the distress if he failed to give regular work to the ordinary staff during the summer months. Nevertheless, with foresight and organisation it ought to be possible to have in readiness a certain amount of public work which might be given to the carefully-selected unemployed. It was pointed out in the London County Council's report that in London there are 3,000 public buildings, the internal cleaning and decorating of which might easily be postponed until the slack months. It would mean the employment of a large number of men in a more regular fashion, for overtime is common with painters, etc., during the spring and summer. The money thus earned in this regular way would go much

further. Overtime is very common in Government factories and dockyards, and this is chiefly due either to the fact that the War Office and Admiralty do not see far enough ahead, or to lack of organisation.

That such careful organisation is not unknown on the Continent is evidenced by the fact that so long ago as 1894 the Minister of Commerce and the Home Minister on behalf of the Prussian Government addressed to the various districts a circular concerning the organisation of the provisional employment, in which occur the following directions:—

"We further request you to have the goodness to direct your attention to those measures which are calculated to prevent the occurrence of want of work on a wide scale, or to mitigate its effects when it is unavoidable. Not only the State, but also the provinces, districts, and communes, in their capacity as employers, are bound to do their utmost to counteract the evil in question by paying general and methodical attention to the suitable distribution and regulation of the works to be carried out for their account. In almost every industrial establishment of importance there are tasks which do not absolutely need to be performed at a fixed time; just so in every State and communal administration there are works for the allotment of which the time may, within certain limits, be freely chosen according to circumstances. *If all public administrations, in making their arrangements, would take timely care to choose for such works times in which want of employment is to be expected, if especially works in which unemployed people of all kinds, including in particular unskilled labourers, can be made use of, were reserved for such times of threatening want*

of employment as have almost regularly recurred of late in winter in the larger towns and industrial centres, the real occurrence of widespread want of employment could certainly be prevented in many cases, and serious distress warded off. A mitigation of the distress will often prove possible if, when the need of hands begins to diminish at times when other work is wont to be hard to find, the public industrial establishments do not at once dismiss their hands, but render it possible to keep them all on by shortening the daily hours of work, or by putting in rest shifts, as is usual in the mining industry.

"As the experience of the last few years has repeatedly shown that even large communes have been wanting in the desirable foresight, and have not set relief works on foot till the want of work had assumed very serious dimensions and distress had already set in, you will have the goodness to draw the attention of the administrations of the districts and communes under your authority to the above-mentioned measures, which are incumbent on you and them as employers of labour.

"Finally, you will have the goodness to take care that you are informed, as soon as possible, of all occurrences and circumstances which afford ground for inferences as to the probable development of the labour market in your district, especially of approaching considerable diminutions and increases of industrial activity, in order that you may be able, when occasion offers, to direct the attention of the superintendents of public works and administrative undertakings, and of the existing labour bureaux, to the state of things, and, when necessary, to use your official influence in favour of the timely introduction of extraordinary measures."

(5) *Labour Colonies and Poor Law Farms.*—It is the general experience of all the colonies both in England and on the Continent that a very large

number of men regularly resort to them during the winter months, and in many cases the numbers are doubled during that period. This incursion of colonists is due to two causes. The first is the fact that the vagrant who manages to get along fairly well during the summer without a permanent abode is driven by stress of weather to take the only shelter open to him, although it is accompanied by some labour; the second, that the unskilled are much more likely to be unemployed during the winter. These facts are well known, and seem to point to the conclusion that labour colonies should differentiate between these types of unemployed.

The principle adopted should be to send the vagrant who is determined to do as little work as possible to the compulsory colony, to take the unskilled labourer who is unable to find work during the winter months and who is perhaps of rather poor quality into a farm colony that is run by a board of guardians, as in the case of the Poplar colony, or by a large municipality, or finally by the new Committee formed under the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905. Purge the German or Swiss colony of its semi-criminal element, and you would have a satisfactory method of helping a large section of the unskilled unemployed. One colony run upon the German lines is already in existence at Libury Hall, Great Munden, Herts. The scheme is partially one of repatriation, and to some extent it has been successful in this direction. Mr. E. D.

Court, a Local Government Board inspector, has given an admirable account of its work.

"The object and working of the colony might be stated thus:—The mission of the colony being not to give alms nor money, but to help by affording opportunity to work, the freehold of 300 acres of suitable land in Hertfordshire was purchased. About thirty-five acres of this is occupied by buildings, poultry-runs, and duck ponds, willow bed, gravel pit, fruit and vegetable garden, and wood; thirty acres by meadow, and the remainder is sown or planted with wheat, rye, barley, oats, potatoes, beans, swedes, turnips, artichokes, clover, rape, mustard, vetches, and sainfoin. A basket-weaving shop on a large scale was erected, with a carpenter's shop and smithy, and large well-ventilated stables, cowsheds, and piggeries, also small shops for tailor and shoemaker, a bake-house, laundry (now being greatly enlarged), dairy, kitchen, etc. In all these departments, as well as in cleaning the house, work is found, but the great majority of men are employed out of doors, the stronger men in digging gravel, breaking flints, making roads, and so on; the weaker in the garden or looking after the poultry. There are sixteen cart-horses, and about the same number of milk cows, and useful experience has been gained by intending emigrants looking after them. Beds were at first provided for 90 men, 64 of them in one large dormitory, divided into sixteen cubicles. Later, to meet the winter pressure, room for twenty more beds was found by cutting off a part of the basket-weaving department, and it is proposed shortly to build for 150 more men. From the foundation of the colony to the end of 1903, 1,223 men were received, of whom 83 left after a short time, unwilling to work; 44 were sent away for bad behaviour; 1 died; 44 were sent to hospital ill; money from home came for 77; 105 left of their own accord without prospect of a place, including in all, 354. Of the others 98 were at the

end of 1903 at the farm; places had been secured by 370, and the journey money back to Germany had been earned by 401. So that 869, or more than two-thirds of those received, had been distinctly benefited. As to financial position, the colony is not self-supporting so far, and probably never will be. The buildings have involved large expenditure, and the expenses are heavy. For ten weeks' work a man receives not only board and lodging, but, if necessary, clothing, and a sovereign is spent on his return journey to Germany, while he is given tokens to the value of 1½*d.* a night during his stay at the colony unless he misbehaves. On the other hand, the average stay is a little under eight weeks, and for the first three weeks, owing to poor condition and so on, not very much work is done. Also there is difficulty in finding a market for some articles."

Poor Law Farms.—We have only one Poor Law Farm in England, so that our experience is admittedly rather limited, but up to the present the experiment seems to have been a success. The guardians of the Poplar Union for several years had in contemplation the question of providing work for the unemployed on the land as an alternative to stone-breaking in the workhouse. This movement originated in a conference of metropolitan boards of guardians in November, 1894. The resolutions were submitted to the Local Government Board, and the following answer was returned:—

"If the guardians of any union should determine on a scheme for providing land with a view to its being used so that work thereon may afford a test of the necessities of persons who apply to them on the ground of their being unemployed, and inform the Board

fully of their proposals and of the details of the arrangements which they contemplate, the Board will give the matter their careful consideration."

Later on the guardians submitted a proposal for the purchase of a farm of 200 acres, but the Local Government Board refused their sanction on the ground that the land must be purchased as a site for a workhouse, and not as a farm colony.

After a temporary experiment in connection with the Salvation Army colony at Hadleigh, and a second experiment on land acquired near Shenfield as a site for new schools, the guardians, through Mr. Geo. Lansbury, the moving spirit in this new departure, received an offer from Mr. Joseph Fels of a suitable tract of land for a farm colony. Mr. Fels offered to the Board a farm of 100 acres at Dunton, near Laindon in Essex, purchased for the sum of £2,125, including a house and farm buildings, and an agreement was entered into under which the land and buildings are let by Mr. Fels to the guardians for a term of three years at a peppercorn rent with the option to the guardians of purchasing at the price paid for the same at any time during the period of the tenancy. Some iron buildings were purchased and erected as dormitories and dining-room. These buildings, together with laundry and lavatory blocks, cost £1,278, while repairs to existing buildings, rain-water tanks, etc., cost £481. The buildings were completed in June, 1904, and by the end of August the full complement of 100 men were in residence.

The men work eight hours a day, after which they are at liberty to leave the premises or occupy their leisure as they think fit. Books and games are provided for their use and amusement. Full liberty is given to the men to attend church or chapel in the district on the Sunday. An allowance of 1½ ozs. of tobacco is made to each of the colonists per week, and the dietary table is on a liberal scale. The general work of the colonists consists of tilling the land, which is rather heavy in nature, but at present a considerable number are engaged in the construction of a reservoir capable of storing 200,000 gallons of water, the whole of this work being carried out by the colonists with the assistance of one paid bricklayer. Judging from the latest reports, very few of the men have abused their liberty, and very few have proved recalcitrant.

It is worth while quoting the evidence of a recent visitor to the farm:

"It was past noon when I approached Sumpner's Farm. Having regard to the general flatness of the county, the farm occupies a fair elevation. The old farm-house nestles cosily behind a copse of tall trees. A few hundred yards nearer the high road on some rising ground are large, roomy buildings of corrugated iron. These are the dormitories, dining-room, lavatories, and laundry blocks built for the accommodation of the colonists. As I drove up to the farm several dogs rushed out to bark a cordial greeting. Then the air bore to us the sounds of merry laughter. It was honest, healthy, human mirth, and the sound of it broke pleasantly on the ear. A moment later

one discovered its cause. Dinner was just over, and the younger colonists were devoting the remainder of their dinner-hour to a game of football, while the elder ones looked on with critical eyes. Goal-posts were in position, and an Association ball, rather the worse for wear, was being driven from end to end with great energy and good humour, and to the accompaniment of frequent shouts of laughter from players and spectators. Such laughter no man had heard in any workhouse in the land. Yet these men all came to the farm straight from the workhouse only three months ago, and some of them had spent years in that joyless abode."

It is perhaps rather early to pronounce definitely on the value of this experiment, but it seems to point to the fact that if the best of the able-bodied inmates of the workhouse could be selected there seems no real reason why they should not be made at least partially self-supporting upon similar farm colonies throughout the country, and eventually fitted to take up the work of agriculture. Mr. Fels is offering farms to about half a dozen boards of guardians, and West Ham has already accepted his offer, while others are at present considering the question.

CHAPTER VII.

THOSE WHOSE LABOUR IS SEASONAL AND CASUAL.

WHEN we come to consider the question of those unemployed whose labour is seasonal or very casual we are confronted with a much more difficult problem. In Germany and Switzerland, as we have pointed out, it is found that at the labour colonies the number of colonists almost invariably doubles during the winter. This is partly due to the vagrant class of colonist, but partly also to the large number of casual labourers who fail to find work during this period.

The most striking illustration of this seasonal and casual labour is to be found at the docks, especially the London docks, where a large army of men compete against one another for the chance of a few hours' work. There are certain seasons of the year when more men are employed than at others, and the wool and tea cargoes only come in at special times. It is estimated that there are something like 22,000 dockers in East London, and at least 5,000 would be idle on any one day. Such labour as is employed in the docks might doubtless be better organised, and one central authority governing all the docks and taking on

all the labourers as far down as Tilbury would no doubt eliminate a good deal of this surplus labour and free it to seek other employment. At the same time it must be remembered that there are always seasons when less riverside labour is required, and the question is what can be done with these unemployed men during the long periods of enforced idleness.

(*a*) *Allotments and Vacant Lot Cultivation.*—The remedy is a simple one, so simple in fact that up to the present it has been ignored. The casual docker requires an allotment which he may cultivate in his leisure hours, situated either near the docks or on land in close proximity, such as can readily be found in Essex. There are well-known instances of this already in existence, and so far as the few allotments in the immediate neighbourhood of the Victoria and Albert and East India Docks are concerned, they may be considered an unqualified success. A docker, working at one of these allotments, whose success had been remarked, said to the writer, "I shall never be afraid of starvation while I have this little piece of land. It isn't much, it is true, but it is just enough to tide me over bad times and gives me work to do on the days when I know there is no likelihood of a 'call on.'" This winter the dock district has once more been the scene of much unemployment, and a vast amount of consequent distress. No solution seems to be quite possible without some other form of occupation,

combined with an attempt to organise the dock and shipping industries on lines that would render unnecessary so much casual labour. If some casual labour is indispensable, why not establish a colony of dockers within easy reach of the docks, giving each man his own small holding or allotment. The colony might be in telegraphic or telephonic communication with the docks so that at an hour's notice as many men as were required might be brought up by train or electric tram. In their leisure time these men would be able to profitably cultivate their small plot of land, growing vegetables for their own consumption. They would thus be saved from the demoralising conditions which seem to attend casual dock labour, and at the same time be adding to their scanty earnings. The docks themselves would no longer afford the great attraction that it is at present to the idle and ne'er-do-well, and a great improvement would be effected in the condition of the East End.

If a regular colony be an impossibility for such men, it would at least be possible to try the plan suggested for London by Sir John McDougall (whose allotments at Millwall proved so successful) and by Mr. Hendry Wallace, J.P., for Gateshead. The idea is to take waste land in the neighbourhood of the town and place upon this land day by day men who by the nature of their work are only seasonally or casually employed. Into this land is to be dug the street refuse, which is often wasted

at present, in order that the ground may be improved and made fit for market gardens or allotments. The men might be taken down to the work by special workmen's trains and brought back in the same way at the end of the day.

It is worth while considering the experiments that have been made in the United States in this connection. Mayor Pingree in Detroit a good many years ago started the idea of handing over the vacant lots in the city to the unemployed to cultivate, and the Vacant Lots Cultivation Association at Philadelphia[1] has taken up the idea, and made it immensely successful. About eight years ago, during a period of industrial depression, Mr. Joseph Fels, with a few others, formed an association in Philadelphia which had for its object the using of the vacant land in and round the city for the assistance of the unemployed. The method of procedure was to approach the owners of the land and ask them if they would permit such land to be cultivated, an undertaking being given that it would be handed over whenever required. The result was that, starting with 14 acres, they now have about 300 acres let out in small plots to the unemployed, whom the association supplies with seeds and the means for ploughing, harrowing, and manuring, the cultivators taking the proceeds in the shape of food, vegetables, and garden produce. The association spends in this way less than £1,000 a year, and is enabled by this

[1] Appendix No. 6.

means not only to employ, but practically to support, for long periods of time a considerable number of men with their wives and families. At the present moment 796 men with relatives and families dependent upon them are being assisted by the association. There is, of course, very little vacant land within the borders of London that could be cultivated, but there is still a large amount of land on the outskirts, in the extra-metropolitan districts, which could easily be obtained, and the attempt to start such an association might at least be made in connection with other towns.

(*b*) *Home Industries.*—The other suggestion that seems of value is along the lines of the report of the Recess Committee (1896), with regard to the establishment of a department of Agriculture and Industries for Ireland. What is needed for those men who are not able to get full and continued employment, whose labour is seasonal or of necessity casual, is some other industry, and the report referred to quotes many instances of home industries which were suggested as a solution for some of the Irish difficulties. Many of these illustrations are taken from the Continent. The report states that there are forty-three different categories of cottage industries, each of them covering at least a dozen trades, flourishing in the provinces of Moscow alone. These industries are carried on by Russian peasants more or less in connection with agriculture, which in Russia is definitely

a season trade. The annual value of these minor industries of the Russian peasants is about £5,000,000, that of their hand-loom weaving being about half the amount per annum. There are other flourishing cottage industries to be found in Germany, in the provinces of Bavaria, of Bohemia, of Wurtemburg; also in Switzerland and the Austrian Tyrol. The little kingdom of Wurtemburg is a striking illustration of what can be done by the establishment of home industries. Forty years ago it was "purely agricultural and impoverished by over-population." Its condition was described as deplorable. Dr. Von Steinbeis, President of the Board of Trade in Wurtemburg, struck with the poverty of the country and with the possibility of handicrafts which he had seen at the London Exhibition in 1851, resolved to try if these handicrafts could not be taught in his own province. He investigated throughout the length and breadth of Europe, and then founded a Board of Industries, to which was entrusted the task of introducing and developing crafts and industries. These industries are carried on by an agricultural population in their leisure time, and England now buys from Wurtemburg blankets, carpets, flannels, hosiery, linens, drugs, chemicals, paper, wood-carving, toys, furniture, hats, and a large number of other manufactured goods. As a result, the director of the Royal Bank at Stuttgart reported:—"There is not a pauper in the kingdom of Wurtemburg." Such results may be obtained

without any excessive interference with the ordinary course of trade and industry.

In Switzerland the peasants, owing to the winter seasons, are compelled to find other employment during those months, and they have developed many important home industries, such as wood-carving, which gives a return of more than £1,000,000 a year, and embroidery work, which yields a still larger profit. In France[1] the numerous small industries of the villages are a specially striking feature, due largely to the fact that the labour of the peasant is only seasonal, and that his small holding is not sufficient to keep him in occupation the whole of the year, even if labour were possible during the winter. If assistance could be given to the seasonally and casually unemployed very much in the same way that the Congested Districts Board in Ireland helps or might help the Irish peasant, a great deal of the worst of the evil might be overcome, though even then we ought not to lose sight of the fact that seasonal and casual labour, however beneficial to individual employers, is detrimental to the best interests of the community as a whole, and for that reason should by foresight and organisation be reduced to a minimum.

[1] *Contemporary Review*, September, 1904. "The Small Industries of France," by Erik Givskov.

CHAPTER VIII.

TYPES OF LABOUR COLONIES.

THE idea of labour colonies has come into great prominence in England during the last two or three years. Hadleigh and Lingfield have both been in existence for at least a decade, and thoughtful philanthropists have long regarded them as a hopeful method of dealing with a certain type of the unemployed—the men who are below par in physique and will-power, the men who have sapped their strength by drinking habits and viciousness.

The forming of the Central Unemployed Committee for London, together with the subsequent passing of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, have given a great impetus to the whole movement, which was looked at askance when the writer advocated before the "Distress from Want of Employment Committee" ten years ago the value of such methods for dealing with a large class of the unemployed.

Now that the Central Unemployed Committee under the new Act has taken over Hollesley Bay from the original committee, it is more than probable that this farm colony, which is at present only loaned by Mr. Joseph Fels, will be bought outright. Even so, since the new Act does not allow for the maintenance of the colony, but only for the acquisition of the land (Clause 1, 6, A. 3), it is likely that the development of this work will

be slower than would otherwise have been the case. However, partly by subscriptions from the Boards of Guardians and partly by voluntary subscriptions, it ought to be possible to make experimental use of the colony until the amendment of the law allows governmental or rate aid. When the Act is so amended, a clause should be inserted which allows of an Exchequer subvention in the form of a capitation grant according to the average number of unemployed under training as colonists, somewhat on the lines of the Necessitous School Boards Act of 1897, or in some other way as may be found expedient.

Of one thing there can be no doubt, and that is, that the colony must discriminate between the class of man sent at the present moment by the Poor Law authorities to Hadleigh and Lingfield, and that large section of the unemployed which is genuinely desirous of employment and has not yet been demoralised and degraded by the vain search for work. The Poor Law authorities and the municipalities are face to face with quite different problems, which ought never to be confused, even in thought.

The great mistake that the German colonies have made is in their lack of classification, for within the same colony it is possible to find the hardened criminal, the first offender, the weak-willed inebriate, the physically deficient, and the honest unemployed man who is on the tramp looking for work. The result frequently is that the lower type benefits at the expense of the

higher, and this will account for the fact that working men find it very difficult to get employment direct from the colony. In Germany not one type alone, but a series of colonies graded to suit the needs of the various classes of unemployed, is required. This will probably be carried out if the "Heimat-kolonisten" experiment proves successful. It may be contended, of course, that the central committee is not limited to one colony, and this, no doubt, is true. None the less, an attempt should be made at the very outset to avoid the mistakes into which other nations have fallen.

The Poor Law authorities alone ought to have two colonies, one for the weak-willed inebriate, the physically and mentally defective, the other for the able-bodied inmates of the workhouse who are morally defective, *e.g.*, the vagabond. It would be as well, therefore, whatever is the result of the Act, that the London Poor Law districts should be grouped as proposed by Mr. George Lansbury, of the Poplar Board of Guardians, under the 40th section of the Divided Parishes Act, 1876. This would give a central body composed of the various Poor Law authorities power to purchase five or six thousand acres of land, which could be divided into the two colonies already mentioned.

The cost of maintaining such colonies would certainly be no more than the present system, and the gain would be infinite in a variety of directions.

The German colonies, notwithstanding the fact that they have to take all sorts and conditions of men, cost little more than 5s. per head per week, while the cost at Luhlerheim [1] is only about half that amount.

Another colony might be formed by the borough councils or the London County Council for a still better class of man who ran the risk of being pauperised by long spells of inaction due to depression in trade or a severe winter, and in such a colony it would be possible to take a few mechanics, for in every large colony it has been found that such men are needed, in the first instance at any rate, while much of the building required is being carried out. Thus it would be possible to find use for a number of bricklayers, carpenters, and blacksmiths. This colony would be considered to some extent as a testing ground, and as the men would many of them be quite ignorant of country life, only the simplest form of work would be given to them—no elaborate machinery, few horses, and no valuable cattle. If they eventually took to the work and desired to stay, they might be passed on to a higher grade colony.

This class of colony, started by the big municipalities or county councils and subsidised by the Government, would have for its special object the establishing of the unemployed upon the land, and the men selected in the first instance

[1] For an account of Luhlerheim, see Appendix No. 7.

would be those who had some knowledge of agriculture and a desire to return once more to the country. The remainder, who had little or no knowledge, but who nevertheless were anxious to acquire it, should be set to work under skilled and trained supervision, and for them the colony should be a kind of agricultural school with Government support, as in Holland, Germany, Hungary, etc., to which also the sons of neighbouring labourers might be sent for instruction. In connection with it would be the small holdings already alluded to, taken up by the colonists so soon as, in the judgment of the director, they were fit and ready to be so assisted. Here also there would be room for a number of mechanics and skilled men for the repairing of carts and ploughs, the construction of fresh buildings, etc. An essential feature in this series of graded colonies would be the possibility of passing a man from one to another, so that if he improved and showed himself to be a painstaking and industrious man he might find a ladder at his feet, and eventually win his way to independence on a small holding. There is now very general agreement amongst all who have had to do with such work that *graded colonies are a necessity*, since it is impossible to deal with any one section of men without sooner or later feeling the need of further classification.

If any proof of this is required we may instance the Christian Union of Social Service colony at Lingfield, which for a great variety of reasons,

chiefly financial, has had to accept all sorts and conditions of men. The director, the Rev. J. L. Brooks, is a practical farmer who has put his experience at the service of the Lingfield colony. The farm is of 250 acres, and has now been established for nine years, so that a good deal of valuable experience has been gained. It has accommodated for the last five years some fifty or sixty men, and the types of men sent by boards of guardians may be thus described :—

First.—Youths with physical defects; others dull-witted or half-witted. These were, for a considerable time, the only cases that guardians would send.

Second.—Men at the other end of life, nearly all over fifty years of age. A few of these would spend the remainder of their days in the workhouse; but, on the land, would be able partly or wholly to maintain themselves for some years.

Third.—The ne'er-do-well sons of lower middle-class homes, who are exceedingly difficult to direct.

Fourth.—The drunkards. Of these last the colony has had, among the 500 men who have been through it, 120.

"From the first day until now," says Mr. Brooks, "we have never had a man who was (*a*) sober, (*b*) healthy, (*c*) skilful, (*d*) young, (*e*) industrious."

He adds a somewhat pathetic appendix :—

"Guardians do not seem to have realised the opportunities that Lingfield supplies, and so they

have sent to us very largely, almost entirely, indeed, their hopeless cases. The able-bodied 'in-and-out' of the workhouse they do not care to send; I suppose because of the hope that these men will be more economically dealt with as 'in-and-outs' than by the more continuous expenditure which a farm colony would, for a time, involve."

There is no reason, however, why Lingfield colony should not be subsidised to do this especial work, for despite the poor material, the results have been very gratifying. Another mistake, however, made by both the Local Government Board and boards of guardians is in demanding conclusive reports after three months' trial, and in certain cases withdrawing the men. As Mr. Brooks says:—

"In the case of a helpless youth, weak, undersized, underfed until brain and body are stunted and starved, a great deal of time and patience, assisted by fresh air and wholesome food, are needed before there is any kind of intelligent response. But under these influences, in certain cases, after as much as one or two years, there is both physical and mental development which, without such influences, would be impossible. Yet the Local Government Board and boards of guardians demand conclusive reports after three months' trial, and, in certain cases, withdraw the men!"

He claims to have been successful in rehabilitating 33 per cent. of the cases put in his hands, and if this can be done, it is certainly an immense gain to the country that there should be such institutions capable of treating in a humanitarian spirit the men and lads who in the eyes of the world are

quite hopeless. The cost is heavy, but less heavy than under the Poor Law. It works out at 9*s.* per week, per man, exclusive of clothing, the chief items being food, 4*s.* 10*d.* per week, lodging and laundry, 2*s.* 2*d.*, superintendence, 1*s.* 6*d.*, waste and medical care, 6*d.* In Mr. Brooks' opinion it is quite impossible to make farming pay with such labour, and the chief assets are "the helpless lives made useful, the waste lives reclaimed, the drunkards restored and mischief prevented."

He insists on the need for classification, and for different types of colonies.

"Classification is absolutely necessary. The idle, the slow, the mischievous, set the stroke, and pull down to it those that have more skill, speed, industry, and better nature. Further, it is impossible to deal wisely with the drunkard, and the older men, in company with youths. Besides this, cases differ in taste and capacity; so that workshops would be best for some, and farm labour the ideal thing for others. There is also the great class of vagrants for whom provision should be made. For some of the first-named, and perhaps all the tramps, legal compulsion seems to be a necessity. Then further, there are the male adult epileptic and the feeble minded; these it would be a blessing to employ in connection with the land."

What is true of Lingfield is more or less true of Hadleigh. Owing to financial considerations, the Salvation Army has not been able to do at Hadleigh much of the work for which it is especially fitted. Amongst a rather large body of men below par are a few capable and willing workers who have come down through misfortune. These men

are invariably emigrated or find work for themselves in some permanent occupation. The majority drift back again to the town because there is no power of holding them, and because even if there were this power, the Salvation Army could not stand the financial strain of reclaiming them. Those who protest against the custom of the Salvation Army in paying practically no wages for at any rate the first few months fail to recognise that many of these men do not earn by their labour even sufficient to pay for their board and lodging. It is altogether unjust to regard them as being exploited in the interests of a religious body. They are the typically unfit, the physically and mentally weak, men who have given way to drink and are not capable of sustained and continuous exertion. To help such men is the work that the Salvation Army colony is best fitted, but it cannot do so unless it is financially aided from without. Whenever the colony has had some of the better class, it has employed them with profit. This is evidenced by the success of the Easton Lodge experiment, when the Countess of Warwick engaged from the Salvation Army over sixty men to do the work of laying out gardens and landscape gardening under skilled supervision. The total cost does not seem to have been more than it would have been under an ordinary contract, and the rate of pay, 6½*d.* per hour, is the Trades Union rate for navvies. Both the Countess of Warwick and the Salvation Army seem to have

been absolutely satisfied with this venture, and this would lead us to think that these men were very much the type sent down by the Poplar Board of Guardians to the Laindon colony. Such men should be immediately promoted to another colony of a better type unless work can be found for them, and the Salvation Army should be allowed to deal exclusively with the men who need the reforming and the reclaiming influence which it can bring to bear.

One illustration amongst many may be stated from the evidence of Colonel Lamb before the Charity Organisation Society Committee, to justify the position that the Army takes up :—

"I have a man in my mind now who after several weeks' work thought that he was earning a little more than he was getting. He had been a commercial traveller. We had his wife in one of the homes in London. The arrangement was that if he behaved well for six months, and the wife behaved well for six months (they were both drunkards), then they could be together for six months on the colony, and afterwards their friends would probably do a little more for them in the way of emigration, or getting them a situation in this country. The man thought that he was earning something, and so he had piecework, which we are prepared to give, valuing the work absolutely by the standard current in the district. The man earned 3*d.* for the day's work. He worked very hard, it is true, but being unskilled he was judging of his own value by the amount of actual sweat that he had put into it. Then when he had the 3*d.* he came to me and he was rather boisterous. He asked me if that was enough for a Christian man to live on. I said that I did not think it was, but then I took the

opportunity of explaining to him a little more fully the principles that govern the place. I made inquiries, and found that he was behaving all right. He was a bit suspicious of us. I gave him an order to what we call our 'Home Office,' dealing with all home affairs, to make up the minimum to him, and I encouraged him in other ways. He gradually improved his position, until last winter he earned as an ordinary employee on the place, at rates that would be paid in the neighbourhood, wages averaging from 13s. to 30s., according to the weather and the work, and he has maintained himself for the last six months."

The German colonies are on the whole extremely well managed, and the moral influence of the directors and house-fathers is such that the likelihood of reformation is much greater than in the Belgian institutions. No one can doubt that the very best is being made of the poor material at their disposal by the directors of these colonies, and the one criticism which holds after careful examination is that they have been required to perform an impossible task. If they were established to put an end to the wanderings of the idle and more or less criminal vagrant, then it is unfair to compel a single genuine man to enter. If on the other hand the main idea was to help the unemployed who of necessity must move from town to town looking for work, then the issue has been hopelessly confused by the admission of tramp and criminal. The "Heimatkolonisten" experiments seem to point to the fact that the Germans have felt the need for more classification, and it is to be hoped that after the

success of Schäferhof there will be a great development in this direction.

In order that we may be able to see what are the possibilities and the defects of existing colonies, it would be well to group them in four types. At the same time it must be remembered that this grouping is somewhat arbitrary and that many of the colonies overlap. When they were established, it was not definitely and clearly understood exactly which classes of unemployed or unemployable it was proposed to serve, and the result is that the only radical distinction which exists is that between the penal and the free colonies.

What is required is that the State and the local authority should attempt what every employer does for himself every day, distinguish between men of good and bad character. The workhouse or the labour colony in the town would be the first rough test. Men whom it is impossible to assist in the town would then be sent as classified to one of four or five types of colony, it being clearly understood that the reward of industry and ability would be promotion from one grade to another, until finally full independence were achieved either in the ordinary channels of employment, or in a position of independence as a small holder on the land.

Name of Colony.	Character of Colonists.	Number of Colonists.	Nature of Work.	Remarks.
(3) Unemployed (Higher Type)—*continued.*				
Holland—				
Frederiksoord ... ... Willemsoord ... ... Wilhelminasoord	Unskilled labourers, many over 40, from Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Very few agricultural labourers.	1900.	Agriculture, dairying, farm, brickmaking, matmaking, etc.	Married men with wives and families are taken. There are about 400 families and 148 free farmers (7½ acres). A growing tendency to receive paupers on contract is noticeable. The colonies are not so well managed as German colonies.
France—				
La Chalmelle	About 20 per cent. poor type of unskilled man given to drink; sent by directors of night refuges; this together with 74 per cent. of agricultural labourers out of work.	55.	Farm work.	Nearly 60 per cent. obtain situations from the farm. It would be far better to exclude the bad characters and start another colony for them.
Germany (Heimat-Kolonisten)—				
(*a*) Experiment at Freistatt	Unskilled labourers, willing to work.	2.	Farm work and small holdings.	Too small to be of much importance as an experiment. It is intended to grow gradually.
(*b*) Friedrichwilhelmsdorf	Town-bred men who have been taught rudiments of agriculture.	35.		Fairly successful as compared with a few years back.
(*c*) Schäferhof	Unskilled labourers, industrious, able-bodied, and willing.	100.	900 acres of land. Houses and buildings are constructed by colonists. Work chiefly agricultural and farm work, but also fruit farming, forestry and greenhouses.	An almost unqualified success. See Board of Trade Report (1904), p. 51.

CHAPTER IX.

SUMMARY OF GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

We may now state in outline the main conclusions at which we have arrived. Without covering the whole ground, they indicate with more or less distinctness the lines upon which, in our opinion, the unemployed problem may be at least partially solved.

(1) *The appointment of a Minister of Commerce and Industry, and the establishment of a Government Department to deal especially with the question of unemployment.*—If this is a national question, a special Minister at the head of a special department should have the responsibility placed upon him of dealing with it. The partial reorganisation of existing departments dealing with labour is a necessary preliminary.

(2) *Compulsory Labour Bureaux.*—These bureaux in telephonic communication should be established in every district, as in Germany, and should not be confined to municipal boroughs. They would supply the central department with all the facts and figures for each locality, and help to devise schemes for the relief of distress by want of employment in that locality. They should do more than register the names and addresses of the

unemployed. Careful investigation should be made in each case, to be followed by classification; employers should be interviewed; work should be found or suggested; railway fares should be paid to districts where work was more plentiful and advice given as to relief stations, labour homes, etc.

(3) *Relief Stations and Labour Homes.*—The casual ward should be abolished, and scattered throughout the country, within walking distance of one day, should be relief stations and labour homes where the unemployed, in return for a few hours work, can be boarded and lodged for one or two nights while a search is made for employment. There should be a labour registry in connection with each relief station, and the stations and the labour bureaux should be in telephonic communication, so that the impostor and idle vagrant may be readily discovered.

(4) *A Graded System of Farm and Labour Colonies:* including the following types:—

(*a*) *A Farm Colony for married and unmarried Agricultural Labourers or Men accustomed to work on the Land who have migrated to the Town and are willing to return to the Country.*—The difficulties of repatriating the agricultural labourer are not insuperable, and the establishment of a colony removes most of them. There should be a time of probation as at Frederiksoord, in Holland. If this period is successfully passed and the colonist has proved himself to be industrious and efficient, a free farm or small holding should be granted to him at a

moderate rent, with security of tenure so long as the tenant proves himself to be able and willing to treat the land fairly. Loans of money for stock, seeds, etc., might be obtained through a local agricultural bank started by the colony for this purpose on the Raiffeisen principle. The free farmers should be organised and taught to work co-operatively as on the small holdings in Lincolnshire and Norfolk. If cottages for the married men are to be cheaply built, the bye laws might have to be relaxed, and in any case the Government, through the county council, should assist in the matter of cheap loans for housing purposes.

(*b*) *A Farm Colony for Town-bred Men, controlled by a large Municipality or a group of small towns, or a representative Committee covering a fairly wide area.*—These colonies would be chiefly for third and fourth rate mechanics, crushed out by severe competition, or for unskilled labourers of good character, who feel their inability to earn a permanent livelihood in the town. Changes in methods of industry and severe industrial depression will account for the process of deterioration constantly going on in this class. Some of them may have worked on allotments near the town; but the majority would have to be taught the rudiments of agriculture. The colony should, therefore, be an agricultural training school, so that after a period of probation men may be passed on to colony A.

(*c*) *A Colony somewhat of the German type, excluding*

the criminal element and men of bad character.—The colonists would consist, in the main, of men of the low-grade unskilled, broken down through misfortune, the hopeless and weak-willed men below par, unable to hold their own in the severe competition of the town. In connection with this colony the labour would be simpler, confined almost entirely to the more elementary work of market gardening, the improvement of land, the making of roads, the trenching of land, and a few simple indoor trades like basket-work, brush-making, and mat-making. Such men are frequently found to improve both in body and mind under the healthy conditions of colony life. The best of them would again be passed on to colony B.

(*d*) *Poor Law farms for epileptics, inebriates and the physically defective.*—The various classes of inmates should be kept separate, and it would be as well to classify in each section. The treatment should be scientific and medical; for example, the percentage of cures in the cases of epilepsy is much greater where sufficient pains in the first place have been taken to trace the causes of the disease. At Bielefeld and Wilhelmsdorf much more care is now being exercised in this matter. For inebriates there are well-known methods of medical treatment which considerably shorten the time during which it is necessary to stay on a farm colony.

(*e*) *Poor Law Colonies compulsory for the vagrant and the wastrel.*—The example of the Belgian colonies must not be followed too closely. Every

effort should be made to reform the vagabond, so that while compelled to work, he may feel that a door of escape into a higher colony is still left open if only he chooses to avail himself of it. Many of our idle, "ne'er-do-wells," are men who have sunk to this low level not altogether as a result of their own evil habits, but partly by reason of the fact that lack of work has caused them to become demoralised and degraded. A certain percentage even of these men might be reformed if properly treated, just as the young criminal is reclaimed by the Borstal system in England, or by the Elmira system in the United States. Men who are at present in a Poor Law farm like that of Poplar, able-bodied inmates of the workhouse, now willing and ready to do a good day's work, would naturally be handed on to a higher type of colony.

(5) *Unemployment Committees or Councils.*—These committees or councils with spending power conferred by legislation and dealing with the unemployed question over wide areas should consist of representatives of existing bodies somewhat on Mr. Walter Long's plan, with power to call to their aid the trades union leaders. They should have full authority to deal with the whole problem and to co-ordinate the various agencies throughout their districts. The cost should be borne partly by the local authorities concerned, and partly by the Imperial Government. Under the control of these unemployment committees would be all

local relief works, relief stations and labour homes throughout the area, together with a central bureau and one or more labour colonies on the lines already indicated.

(6) *The reclamation of Foreshores and waste land, the building of Sea-walls, etc., by the Government Department, on the lines of the experiments made by the Dutch Government.*

The great advantage of this work is that much of it can be left for periods of depressed trade, when the unemployed of the large towns can be drafted out for periods of one or two months at a time.

(7) *The afforestment of waste Land by the Government.*—A beginning should be made with Crown lands suitable for this purpose, thus creating a new and profitable industry. There are over ten million acres of waste lands in the United Kingdom suitable for afforestation purposes.

(8) *The improvement of Canals and inland Waterways;* to be purchased by the Government at the present valuation.

(9) *The re-organisation of the Port of London, carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission with a view to—*

(*a*) The improvement of the Port and river.

(*b*) The reclamation of the river foreshores, and

(*c*) The abolition so far as possible of casual labour in the docks.

(10) *Government grants to Trades Union unemployed insurance,* with a view to the encouragement

of this form of self-help amongst all grades of skilled labour. The subsidies should be proportionate to the contributions of the trades unions.

(11) *A shorter working day for all Government and Municipal Employees.*—This should especially be the case with regard to those who are employed in the work of transport and locomotion where foreign competition can play only a very small part. It has been pointed out that in the case of the London County Council tramways, shorter hours in conjunction with proper management have resulted in increased profits.

(12) *Until some, at least, of these recommendations are carried out, disfranchisement as a result of receiving Poor Law Relief should be abolished. At present only the industrious poor are so disqualified, for the remainder, as a rule, have no fixed domicile.*

In addition to these direct methods of dealing with the problem of unemployment, we must never forget that the solution of the question depends in the long run not so much on the immediate palliatives which we may be able to suggest, as upon such reconstruction and reorganisation of society as will give prominence to the ethical and the co-operative rather than the competitive factors in our national life. While every effort is made to improve and strengthen individual character and to encourage the formation of such habits as will help to obviate many of the social ills we deplore, we must not forget the tendency

of conditions and environment to create these evils.

There is a growing conviction that some form of State interference on behalf of the unemployed is necessary, and if it is argued that this is governmental paternalism, we answer in the words of Sir Arthur Helps, "Never is paternal government so needful as when civilisation is most advanced." Surely it is not beyond the wit of man to discover the happy mean between the grandmotherly legislation which crushes out all independent spirit, and the *laissez faire* policy which, ignoring a great social disease, affects belief in the doctrine of "economic man." This attitude, as de Laveleye said of the land monopoly, is "a sort of provocation of levelling legislation," or even of revolution. The one hope for England is that *pari passu* with the growth of our national wealth will spread the desire to see a greater and more equitable distribution of that wealth. The unemployed question is largely an economic question for which charity, however generous, is no solution. It is the first duty of the State, as also its highest and truest interest, to set on foot such constructive reforms as will check the wholesale demoralisation of large sections of the working classes, and restore to the people the assurance so long denied that honest work will carry with it a just and certain reward.

APPENDIX I.

COPY OF MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S CIRCULAR OF 1886.

Pauperism and Distress.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD,
WHITEHALL.

March 15th, 1886.

SIR,—The inquiries which have been recently undertaken by the Local Government Board unfortunately confirm the prevailing impression as to the existence of exceptional distress amongst the working classes. This distress is partial as to its locality, and is, no doubt, due in some measure to the long continued severity of the weather.

The returns of pauperism show an increase, but it is not yet considerable; and the numbers of persons in receipt of relief are greatly below those of previous periods of exceptional distress.

The Local Government Board have, however, thought it their duty to go beyond the returns of actual pauperism which are all that come under their notice in ordinary times, and they have made some investigation into the condition of the working classes generally.

They are convinced that in the ranks of those who do not ordinarily seek Poor Law relief there is

evidence of much and increasing privation, and if the depression in trade continues, it is to be feared that large numbers of persons usually in regular employment will be reduced to the greatest straits.

Such a condition of things is a subject for deep regret and very serious consideration.

The spirit of independence which leads so many of the working classes to make great personal sacrifices rather than incur the stigma of pauperism, is one which deserves the greatest sympathy and respect, and which it is the duty and interest of the community to maintain by all the means at its disposal.

Any relaxation of the general rule at present obtaining, which requires as a condition of relief to able-bodied male persons on the ground of their being out of employment, the acceptance of an order for admission to the workhouse, or the performance of an adequate task of work as a labour test, would be most disastrous, as tending directly to restore the condition of things which, before the reform of the Poor Laws, destroyed the independence of the labouring classes, and increased the poor rate until it became an almost insupportable burden.

It is not desirable that the working classes should be familiarised with Poor Law relief, and if once the honourable sentiment which now leads them to avoid it is broken down it is probable that recourse will be had to this provision on the slightest occasion.

The Local Government Board have no doubt that the powers which the guardians possess are fully sufficient to enable them to deal with ordinary pauperism, and to meet the demand for relief from the classes who usually seek it.

When the workhouse is full, or when the circumstances are so exceptional that it is desirable to give outdoor relief to the able-bodied poor on the ground of want of work, the guardians in the unions which are the great centres of population are authorised to provide a labour test, on the performance of which grants in money and kind may be made, according to

the discretion of the guardians. In other unions, where the guardians have not already this power, the necessary order is issued whenever the circumstances appear to require it.

But these provisions do not in all cases meet the emergency. The labour test is usually stone-breaking or oakum-picking. This work, which is selected as offering the least competition with other labour, presses hardly upon the skilled artisans, and, in some cases, their proficiency in their special trades may be prejudiced by such employment. Spade husbandry is less open to objection, and when facilities offer for adopting work of this character as a labour test the Board will be glad to assist the guardians by authorising the hiring of land for the purpose, when this is necessary. In any case, however, the receipt of relief from the guardians, although accompanied by a task of work, entails the disqualification which by statute attaches to pauperism.

What is required in the endeavour to relieve artisans and others who have hitherto avoided Poor Law assistance, and who are temporarily deprived of employment is—

1. Work which will not involve the stigma of pauperism;

2. Work which all can perform, whatever may have been their previous avocations;

3. Work which does not compete with that of other labourers at present in employment;

And, lastly, work which is not likely to interfere with the resumption of regular employment in their own trades by those who seek it.

The Board have no power to enforce the adoption of any particular proposals, and the object of this circular is to bring the subject generally under the notice of boards of guardians and other local authorities.

In districts in which exceptional distress prevails, the Board recommend that the guardians should confer with the local authorities, and endeavour to arrange

with the latter for the execution of works on which unskilled labour may be immediately employed.

These works may be of the following kinds, among others:—

(*a*) Spade husbandry on sewage farms;
(*b*) Laying out of open spaces, recreation grounds, new cemeteries, or disused burial grounds;
(*c*) Cleansing of streets not usually undertaken by local authorities;
(*d*) Laying out and paving of new streets, etc.
(*e*) Paving of unpaved streets, and making of foot-paths in country roads;
(*f*) Providing or extending sewerage works and works of water supply.

It may be observed, that spade labour is a class of work which has special advantages in the case of able-bodied persons out of employment. Every able-bodied man can dig, although some can do more than others, and it is work which is in no way degrading, and need not interfere with existing employment.

In all cases in which special works are undertaken to meet exceptional distress it would appear to be necessary, 1st, that the men employed should be engaged on the recommendation of the guardians as persons whom, owing to previous condition and circumstances, it is undesirable to send to the workhouse, or to treat as subjects for pauper relief; and 2nd, that the wages paid should be something less than the wages ordinarily paid for similar work, in order to prevent imposture, and to leave the strongest temptation to those who avail themselves of this opportunity to return as soon as possible to their previous occupations.

When the works are of such a character that the expenses may properly be defrayed out of borrowed moneys, the local authorities may rely that there will be every desire on the part of the Board to deal promptly with the application for their sanction to a loan.

I shall be much obliged if you will keep me informed

of the state of affairs in your district, and if it should be found necessary to make any exceptional provision, I shall be glad to know at once the nature of such provision and the extent to which those for whom it is intended avail themselves of it.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

THE CLERK TO THE GUARDIANS.

APPENDIX II.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORT OF MANSION HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE UNEMPLOYED, 1903-4.

At a meeting of East End workers convened by Canon Barnett, in November, 1903, a scheme of relief works for the unemployed was drawn up on the lines described in the following letter, which appeared in the newspapers on November 25th :—

To the Editor of the "Times."

Sir,—Relief funds collected and administered under the pressure of distress have in past years frequently failed, alienating the hearts of givers and receivers. We do not wish to foretell a time of non-employment, though the state of the riverside districts gives cause for anxiety; but, in the event of such a time occurring, we submit that a well-thought-out scheme should be at once prepared, and that all funds collected should follow the lines of such a scheme. We would, therefore, make the following suggestions, which aim at putting before every unemployed head of a family a means of living, sufficient to keep up the full strength of his family, and of a character which would enable him to retain his self-respect while at the same time affording a real test of need and of manful purpose. Our suggestions are :—

1. That only people possessed of established homes be considered. If exceptions be made, people

will be tempted into London, and the difficulty of giving full relief will be aggravated.

2. That male heads of families be offered work in the country, either on the land or indoors, according to the ability of the worker, and that adequate wages, sufficient for their healthy living, be paid direct to the families.

3. That the men at work should be under no degrading or harassing restrictions, that they should be amply fed, and allowed at short intervals to visit their homes to look for work.

We submit that this scheme is practicable. It could be at once applied, the authorities at the farm colonies at Hadleigh and Lingfield, and at the new colony at Osea Island, being willing to co-operate with responsible committees in providing work and accommodation.

The committee finally decided to agree to the terms asked for by Hadleigh and Osea.[1] The whole work of providing employment in the country was thus contracted for. The colonies undertook the responsibility of organisation and supervision; the provision to some extent of the capital for employment at a time of year unfavourable to the operations proposed; the loan of existing buildings; and the labour and organisation necessary for the erection and preparation of fresh ones. The colonies also took over the risk of loss to capital, or injury to tools and material, through bad work; for the committee were unable at that stage to guarantee the quality or number of the men who were to be sent down, or the length of their stay. Past experience, moreover, afforded only too much reason to doubt the efficiency of heterogeneous bodies of unemployed workmen, more or less unaccustomed to the kind of labour required. The whole of the winding-up expenses, which usually form a large item in the cost of relief

[1] 10s. 6*d*. per week, to include a 6*d*. coupon for tobacco, stamps, etc.

works, especially if for lack of funds or other reason they are brought to a premature close, was also transferred from the committee to the colonies.

Accommodation.—Hadleigh had, at the outset, buildings and furniture for 120. When this was exhausted, the committee consented to advance £68 for the provision of furniture for an additional 40; the colony agreeing to take over this furniture for future use at 50 per cent. of its cost.

Of the 160 men thus housed, the colony was able to provide work for 120 up to the middle of February. For larger numbers, and for a longer period, a capital outlay was necessary greater than the funds of the colony would permit for work not immediately needed. The committee, therefore, agreed to contribute £150 towards the amount required.

At Osea Island, while there was work for an unlimited number, there was accommodation for only 15 men, and the whole of the remainder had to be gradually created as the work proceeded. Four huts, designed to hold 20 men each, were erected at a cost of £160. The number of berths per hut was however subsequently reduced by the local sanitary authorities to 16, the cost being thereby increased from £2 to £2 10s. a head. A large iron shed to hold 120 men was also built at a cost of £400, to which the committee contributed at the rate per head estimated for the wooden huts, *i.e.*, £249 in all. The furnishing of the huts and sheds, and the fitting up of the dining tent and cook-house was undertaken by the colony.

At Osea the men slept in wooden bunks arranged in tiers of two or three; each bunk being closed by partitions on three sides. At Hadleigh they were housed for the most part in large and airy dormitories holding 40 apiece, and slept on iron bedsteads separated by an adequate space. But 25 selected men were placed in a house on the estate, fitted up in the same way, with an average of five beds to a room. In very few cases was the dormitory system a subject of complaint, and the men who were lodged at Hadleigh

Hall took a genuine pleasure in preserving the appearance of their rooms.

Diet.—The food provided was plain but ample. At Hadleigh the Mansion House men received the same food as the ordinary colonists, but at the higher of the two scales in operation there, it being thought inadvisable to place them in any way on inferior terms. But this scale was designed to build up the constitutions of men broken down by privation, and it proved in many cases to be so far superior to the standard of living to which the men were accustomed at home, as to make the colony test less severe than it was intended to be. It included eggs or meat for breakfast, a substantial dinner of meat, vegetables and pudding, and a meat relish for tea. The cost, according to the working estimates of the colony, was expected to average 8s. per head per week.

At Osea Island much the same scale was adopted, although, owing to the difficulties of catering on the island, the cost to the colony proved rather higher. At both colonies, in fact, the feeding of the men resulted in a loss, owing to the "abnormal appetites" developed by some of them.

There is no doubt that the liberal diet had a considerable effect in increasing the capacity of the men for hard outdoor work, in enabling them to gain the fullest possible physical benefit from the fresh sea air, and to endure the inconveniences of country life, of bad weather, and of the absence of alcoholic stimulants. But a lower scale of diet in any future experiment would mean a reduction in the cost, and would at the same time, without causing any undue hardship, render the test more effective, especially with the lower class of applicants.

Nature of Work.—The work at both colonies was of much the same character. Most of it was spade work in the open air, though in a few cases light indoor work was found for men who were more or less temporarily unfit for harder labour. The outdoor work was varied, including road-making, ditching,

pipe-laying, wharf-building, and sea-walling. A few men were employed in painting and house repairing and a dozen or so on the cooking staff.

Supervision.—At both the colonies a good deal of skilled labour was employed for the oversight and instruction of the men. At Hadleigh the men worked in gangs of seven or eight, each under a ganger. These gangs worked under the supervision of the heads of the respective departments of the colony. The home superintendent was responsible for the oversight of the conduct of the men out of working hours, while the whole management was under the control of the resident secretary of the colony. At Osea the few men who were sent down at the start were placed under working gangers, but as the numbers increased it was found necessary to appoint five gangers to look after the men and keep their time. Each ganger had charge of one section of the work, and had from twenty to thirty men under him. The work was supervised by the architect to the estate and a resident engineer, while a superintendent, appointed by Mr. Charrington, was responsible for the discipline of the colony. The committee was fortunate in enjoying the co-operation of such competent superintendents as Brigadier Iliffe at Hadleigh, and Mr. Occomore at Osea.

Conditions of Employment.—The conditions upon which the men were employed were developed from the principles laid down in the original letter as the basis of a labour-test. All the men accepted by the committee were given the opportunity of remaining on the relief works till the close. They were allowed to return home at intervals, at first of a fortnight, and later, of a month, at the expense of the committee. The advantages of continuous work and relief were thus combined with opportunities of seeking employment. The hours of work were determined at first by the limits of daylight, but were gradually extended as the season advanced to a maximum of eight. The men were required to submit to the discipline of the

colony, and this was made as little restrictive as the necessities of order would allow. At both colonies abstinence from intoxicating liquor was required, partly because this was one of the permanent regulations of both places, partly in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the relief money was economically spent. Much of the success of the experiment may be attributed to this rule. At Hadleigh the men were also required to comply with the ordinary rules of the colony, including attendance at muster on Saturday evening, and at some place of worship on Sunday. At Osea danger from the tides rendered it necessary to forbid them to leave the island without permission. The men were, however, free to abandon either colony at any time, but the right of return was only reserved for those who went home for their regular monthly interval, or for special visits by permission of the committee. On the other hand the superintendent had power to dismiss any man for breach of rules or unsatisfactory conduct or work, subject only to the confirmation of the committee.

As remuneration for work under these conditions, the committee provided the men with board and lodging; a coupon exchangeable at the colony stores for tobacco, stamps, or other sundries, to the value of 6*d.* per week; railway fares out and home once a month, or on other occasions for adequate reasons;[1] boots on loan, for special work, or where necessary, for ordinary work; and relief to their families in London.

Relief to Families.—It was an essential feature of the scheme that the men should receive no money, but that relief should be paid direct to their families in London. The scale adopted was proportionate to the size of the families, viz.: 10s. for the wife, 2s. each for the first two children, and 1s. 6*d.* each for

[1] For Hadleigh the committee enjoyed the benefit of the standing arrangement for reduced fares between the railway company and the colony. For Osea the G. E. R. granted special return tickets at single fares.

4. It is inevitable that such treatment should be comparatively costly. The work is undertaken at an unfavourable time of year; there is great risk of loss from inferior work, especially at first, and there is danger of damage, or of waste of time and material, from the occasional employment of inefficient or idle workmen. But the expense is lessened where the above-mentioned precautions are observed. The more rigid the principle of selection, or the conditions of the test, the less will be, not only the actual cost of the work, but also the risk of loss; and the better, therefore, will be the terms that can be proposed to a possible contractor. The less also will be the waste of money upon those whom it is impossible really to help. The increased expense is also compensated for by the thoroughness of the help given, and by the knowledge gained, not only of the men employed and of their families, but also of the general problem. Economy of management would be greatly facilitated by the assistance upon relief committees of gentlemen of direct experience in contracting work.

5. The experience of the committee shows that any simple form of automatic labour test, offering work on exactly the same conditions to all, without preliminary classification and selection, will vary in efficacy with different classes of applicants. This is due to the different ratios which both the sacrifice demanded and the relief offered will bear to the ordinary conditions of work and comfort of the various grades of unemployed. Excluding the radically idle or inefficient who refuse work on any terms, and the skilled workmen who avoid relief altogether, it will be found that any such test will be relatively more attractive to the lower grades of workmen and more deterrent to the higher.

Special steps must, therefore, be taken to secure the absolutely essential principle, that the conditions of the relief work should, in all cases, be more onerous than those of the ordinary labour of the applicant.

Either some method of differentiating the conditions for different classes must be devised, such as the simultaneous establishment of two colonies with different conditions, or the whole offer must be confined to a limited section of the unemployed, and this should obviously be the section which is most likely to receive permanent benefit.

6. The great value of inquiry into industrial character is again demonstrated, and also its extreme difficulty. The standard of work and of conduct that will prevail at a colony, will depend largely on the character of the first draft of men, and this can only be determined by investigation. A high standard renders the test more stringent for the less desirable. A low standard involves greater hardship to the better men. But inquiry is considerably less difficult with the higher class of men selected by the executive. Their industrial record, in most cases, is readily ascertainable, and there is, consequently, less waste of time and money on undesirable cases. In those trades, such as builders' labourers, where continuous employment records are often unobtainable, the labour test forms a second line of defence against imposture, enabling the committee to shorten the inquiry and give an applicant the benefit of a reasonable doubt.

7. The permanent effect upon the men assisted is more difficult to measure. The object of relief works is not so much to elevate as to tide over a bad season, and thus to save from degradation: the former needs, in most cases, more prolonged and more individual treatment than a temporary scheme can provide. Success is therefore achieved if the efficiency of the men and their families is maintained until the revival of trade. Although many men have thus been permanently helped, the results of this year's work are not fully ascertainable, owing to the unusual prolongation of the distress. Slow recovery, however, is unfortunately a natural feature of really exceptional depression. The complete success of such a scheme,

therefore, requires that public support should be continued as long as the distress lasts. Otherwise some of the men may lose their industrial character during the interval, and the only effect of the efforts of the winter may be to delay for a few weeks their degeneracy into the ranks of the "casuals." At the same time, a long period of continuous work under good conditions may of itself raise the standard of living for a time of a family, even of the casual class; and may be a valuable preliminary to some more thorough assistance.

Other forms of permanent help, such as emigration or migration, for those whose prospects in London do not correspond with their abilities, are greatly facilitated by the system of colony relief works. The country work is a test both of physical fitness and of power of adaptation, and the knowledge gained of the character of the men and their families affords valuable help in the work of selection.

8. Time alone can show the effect of the scheme upon the general problem of the unemployed. The details of the experiences of the committee illustrate the possibilities and the difficulties of many of the proposals often put forward for public relief works. But on the still more complex question of the effect of the opening of relief works in decreasing or increasing the amount of unemployment or of dependence upon charity in London, no definite opinion can yet be formed. It can certainly be said, however, that the danger of demoralisation was reduced to a minimum by the conditions laid down in the original letter. Nothing was offered to the vagrant, the loafer, or the cadger; while the indolent and the undesirable were weeded out by the continuity of the work and supervision. Consistency in the adoption and enforcement of these principles would do much to reduce the danger which attaches to a large public fund for the relief of distress, of attracting people to London in the hope of a share of its benefits.

The dangers that attend a repetition of such a scheme

may also be minimised by strict adherence to the policy adopted by the executive committee. Limitation to periods of exceptional distress would avoid the evils that would follow from regular assistance to workers in seasonal trades during their normal period of temporary depression. Such assistance would be equivalent to a permanent addition to their wages at public expense, and would remove all incentive to thrift or organisation. Limitation to those who can give proof of continuous employment in recent times, would avoid the danger of permitting the same men to become dependent on the relief works year after year. If this were allowed, the effect would be merely to transfer, for a number of casual labourers, the season of irregular employment from winter to summer. Finally, care must be taken that the classes of unemployed selected and the conditions imposed upon them, should always bear such a relation, that the relief works should be less attractive than customary employment with market wages and ordinary home life.

To sum up, the scheme of relief works in the country as adopted last winter proved to be thoroughly suited to the class of unemployed working man selected by the executive committee, and fairly successful, though with a much greater proportion of waste, with the better men of the class below.

With a larger and more regular public response to the appeal, very much more might have been done; the machinery of selection and the accommodation at the disposal of the committee could have been more fully utilised, and the bitter disappointment caused to many well-qualified applicants by the suspension of the work in February, and by its premature close, would have been avoided. But the figures indisputably show that in spite of these limitations a large number of genuine unemployed families were thoroughly helped, the men were maintained in health, efficiency, and self-respect, their homes kept together, and their wives and children enabled to preserve a fair standard of comfort through the winter. This

was done without attracting to the fund the habitually dependent, and at a cost which must be regarded as small in proportion to the thoroughness of the relief afforded.

Signed on behalf of the executive committee,

W. VALLANCE,
Chairman.

September 29th, 1904.

APPENDIX III.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT ON LACK OF EMPLOYMENT IN LONDON.

Minutes of the Proceedings at a Conference, on 13th February and 3rd April, 1903, between representatives of the London County Council and of the administrative authorities in London, on the subject of the Lack of Employment in London; together with a Report of the General Purposes Committee of the London County Council, presented to, and adopted by, the Council on 27th October, 1903, with regard to the Recommendations made by the Conference.

In accordance with a resolution passed by the London County Council on 16th December, 1902, all the administrative authorities in London were invited to appoint representatives to attend a Conference "to consider the present lack of employment, and to make representations thereon to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the President of the Local Government Board; and if necessary, to call a further Conference of all public bodies throughout the United Kingdom with a view of approaching His Majesty's Government, and urging upon them the necessity of a national scheme for dealing with the problem."

The first meeting of the Conference took place at the County Hall, Spring Gardens, on 13th February, 1903. Sir John McDougall, then chairman of the council, presided, and Lord Monkswell, vice-chairman, Mr. Henry Clarke, deputy-chairman, and 26 members of the council were present, as were also representatives

of the City Corporation, of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, of the several metropolitan borough councils, and, with one exception, of the respective boards of guardians for London.

At this meeting several suggestions, which had been previously made by the Poplar Metropolitan Borough Council and by the respective boards of guardians of Poplar, Camberwell, Stepney, and Hackney, were discussed, and ultimately referred to a committee consisting of 15 members.

This committee chose as their chairman Mr. John Burns, and as their vice-chairman the Rev. Canon C. E. Escreet. They presented their report at a second meeting of the Conference, held at the County Hall, on 3rd April, 1903, at which Lord Monkswell, the chairman of the council, presided. Mr. E. A. Cornwall, vice-chairman, and Mr. R. A. Robinson, deputy-chairman, and 15 members of the council attended, as did also representatives of the City Corporation, of 17 of the metropolitan borough councils, and of 14 boards of guardians.

This report, which is voluminous and relates to several matters bearing upon the subject of the reference to the committee, contains several recommendations which were adopted by the Conference and submitted to the council. The report and recommendations have been carefully considered by the general purposes committee of the council, whose report thereon was presented to, and approved by, the council on 27th October, 1903.

The resolutions passed by the council, as the result of consideration of the report of its general purposes committee on the recommendations submitted by the Conference, are as follows:—

Relief works.

(*a*) That it be referred to the general purposes committee to consider and report upon the question of preparing schemes of public works, which may usefully

be carried out in the county during periods of distress, and as to the probable cost of such schemes, and their bearing upon the requirements of the county.

Training of surplus town population in needs and ways of country life. Migration and emigration.

(*b*) That it be referred to the Technical Education Board to consider and make a special report (1) as to the steps which may usefully be taken for providing practical training in agricultural pursuits for workers at present in London, and (2) as to the desirability of providing lectures on the colonies, for the benefit of those of the poorer classes who may wish to know of the advantages and conditions of colonisation.

Employment of women.

(*c*) That it be referred to the public health committee to consider and report as to the registration and periodical inspection of the places of employment of outworkers.

Employment of children.

(*d*) That the resolution passed by the Conference on the subject of the employment of children be referred to the public control committee.[1]

Establishment of a more complete industrial organisation throughout the country.

(*e*) That it be an instruction to the general purposes committee to consider, and, if necessary, to communicate with the Prime Minister (i.) on the question

[1] NOTE.—The resolution of the Conference is as follows:—That the Conference do record its opinon that legislation with the object of preventing the employment of children below the age of twelve years is eminently desirable, and that the county council be asked to forward the finding of the Conference on this subject to the Home Secretary.

of constituting the conditions of unemployed workers a subject of local administration, and (ii.) as to the establishment of an industrial organisation throughout the country on the lines of the suggestion made in the report of the committee appointed by the Conference.

Economical difficulties of the poor.

(*f*) That it be referred to the general purposes committee to consider and report as to the advisability of appointing a special committee to inquire into and report upon the economical difficulties of the poor.

National Conference.

(*g*) That copies of the report of the Conference be forwarded to the county, municipal, and Poor Law authorities throughout the country, and that the observations of those authorities be invited thereon.

Relief works by metropolitan borough councils.

(*h*) That the general purposes committee be authorised to communicate with the metropolitan borough councils on the lines of the resolution of the Conference as to the preparation of schemes of public works of a local character.[1]

Period of execution of public works.

(*i*) That it be suggested to the various public authorities in London that, as far as practicable, public work be carried out during the "slack" seasons.

Expediting public works.

(*j*) That the attention of the various public authorities be invited to the paragraph in the report of the

[1] NOTE.—The resolution of the Conference is as follows:—That the county council be recommended to invite the borough councils to prepare schemes of public works of a local character which may usefully be carried out during periods of distress.

committee to the Conference on the subject of expediting public works.[1]

Question of conferring power upon boards of guardians to take land for the purpose of providing work in times of want. Co-operation between borough councils and guardians in times of exceptional distress.

(*k*) That the metropolitan borough councils and boards of guardians be invited to express their views on the suggestions (i.) that power should be conferred upon boards of guardians, either individually or conjointly, to take land for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed in times of want, and (ii.) that during periods of exceptional distress the borough councils should co-operate with the boards of guardians in order that the pauperisation of those persons whose difficulties are occasioned only by exceptional circumstances arising from temporary scarcity of employment, may as far as practicable be avoided.

[1] The paragraph referred to is as follows:—The following resolution was suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians:—"That, in view of the exceptional slackness of demand for labour, public authorities are urged to push on with all expedition work for which provision has already been made, more particularly work like the building of houses, which will employ different classes of skilled labour, and that they be recommended to do this with as little publicity as possible, so as not to attract numbers of the unemployed from the country; and, further, that they be recommended to limit employment on these works to local men so far as is possible." This is a matter to which the attention of the various authorities may be invited, and probably many have already taken action in the direction suggested. It may be mentioned, as an illustration, that although no report was purposely made on the matter, at the commencement of the present winter the chairman of the London County Council arranged that wherever possible works which were required in connection with the council's operations should be pushed forward, and various works in connection with the main drainage, parks, fire-stations, etc., have been expedited in this way. We recommend—That the county council be asked to invite the attention of the local authorities to this paragraph.

APPENDIX IV.

GUILDHALL CONFERENCE, FEBRUARY, 1903.

A CONFERENCE on the Unemployed Question, called by the National Unemployed Committee, was held in the Guildhall, on February 28th and 29th, 1903. It was attended by 587 delegates, representing 123 city and borough councils, urban and rural district councils, boards of guardians, etc., including the Corporation of the City of London, and the London County Council, and 118 trades unions and councils, employers' associations, etc.

The following resolutions were adopted :—

I. GENERAL RESOLUTION.

That the responsibility for finding work for the unemployed in each district should be undertaken jointly by the local authorities and by the central Government, and that such legislation should be introduced as would empower both central and local authorities to deal adequately with the problem.

II. ACTION BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

That the Prime Minister be requested to receive a deputation from this Conference in order to lay before him the urgent necessity for the following legislative and administrative proposals :—

(*a*) That this Conference realising that the interests of industry are the paramount interests of the

community, and that the problem of the unemployed should be dealt with in a sympathetic as well as a practical manner, urges upon the Government the necessity of appointing a Minister of Labour with a seat in the Cabinet, one of whose duties it shall be to organise a special department of his office to deal with recurring periods of depression and distress, to watch for and notify indications of approaching lack of employment, to supplement the Board of Trade statistics, to obtain and disseminate information as to places where work can be had, to help in distributing labour where it is most needed, and, above all, to devise and promote measures for the temporary and permanent utilisation of the unemployed labour of the nation.

(*b*) That the Government forthwith introduce the legislation required and take the necessary steps to provide work for the unemployed—

(1) By carrying into effect the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Port of London;

(2) By promptly granting loans and any other facilities on the application of local authorities for such purposes as laying out villages near great towns, constructing roads and other means of transit from crowded centres to such villages, reclaiming foreshores, afforesting, establishing or utilising farms and other labour colonies, and otherwise providing useful employment;

such employment not to exceed forty-eight hours per week and to be paid for at the trade union rate of wages.

(*c*) That in accordance with the recommendation of the House of Commons Committee of 1895, on Distress from Want of Employment, boards of guardians be empowered to give relief in the shape of useful and productive work to the unemployed during special periods of industrial depression without disfranchising such recipients of relief, and that the Government be requested to make this exemption retrospective so far as this year is concerned.

(*d*) That all work already decided on, in connection with the military, naval, postal and other departments of the Government, be put in hand at the earliest possible moment, and as many workmen as possible be employed thereon.

III.

That municipal and other local authorities be urged forthwith to take the following steps for coping with distress caused by unemployment :—

(*a*) By pressing forward all works already decided upon and by employing as many workers as possible, such work to be put in operation during slack periods of the year and be paid for by the day or hour, at the current wages of the town or district for the class of work performed.

(*b*) By taking in hand plans for draining and reclaiming foreshores and other waste land, demolishing slums and rehousing the inhabitants in villages on the outskirts of towns or otherwise, and undertaking the many other public works necessary for the health and well-being of the community.

(*c*) By establishing labour registration offices (the cost of maintenance to devolve upon the rates) charged with ascertaining as accurately as may be the number and occupations of the unemployed and co-operating with the central Government in finding useful work for such unemployed.

(*d*) By opening municipal shelters for the homeless unemployed in times of exceptional distress, and if necessary applying to the Local Government Board to sanction expenditure for the same.

APPENDIX V.

REPORT OF THE MANSION HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE UNEMPLOYED, 1903-4.

MR. LONG'S SCHEME.

THE following statement contains an outline of the scheme for dealing with the unemployed proposed by the Right Hon. W. H. Long, M.P., President of the Local Government Board, at the Conference of Metropolitan Guardians held at the Local Government Board on 14th October, 1904. Some suggestions are added which he desires to make for the purpose of giving effect to the scheme.

1. It is proposed that a joint committee should be established in each metropolitan borough consisting of representatives of the borough council, of the board of guardians, and of charitable and parochial associations in it.

Throughout the statement the expressions "metropolitan borough" and "borough council" are intended to include the City of London and the Common Council of the City.

2. The joint committee would receive applications for work or relief, examine into the cases, and divide them into two classes: (1) those who are respectable men temporarily distressed owing to inability to obtain employment; (2) those who should be regarded as ordinary applicants for Poor Law relief. The first class would be dealt with by the joint committee, the

second class would be dealt with by the guardians in the usual way.

3. The boards of guardians should render assistance in making inquiries as to applicants. If they need additional officers to enable this to be done, the Local Government Board would be prepared to assent to temporary appointments of such officers, and to issue any order that might be necessary for this purpose. The salaries of the officers would be repaid to the guardians from the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund.

4. The joint committee would ascertain from the borough council and others in the borough how far they could give employment to persons of the first class. It is suggested that men might be employed by the borough councils in work which is not of a skilled character, such as the repair and extra cleansing of streets, painting and whitewashing the interior of town halls, etc., and that men recommended by the joint committee might be employed on works of this kind and any others of a suitable character which the borough council are in a position to undertake.

The joint committee would make a register of applicants for work belonging to the borough and would, in concert with the officers of any labour bureau in the borough, ascertain what work could be obtained in it, and would afford facilities for the interchange of information between the applicants for work and employers.

5. It is most important that the joint committee should use every effort themselves to deal with cases of applicants to them for work, when they are satisfied that the cases are proper to be dealt with. Where, however, they are unable to find work for them, they should place themselves in communication with the central committee mentioned below, who would endeavour to find them work elsewhere.

6. A central committee should be formed on which each of the joint committees should be represented. It would seem desirable that the London County

Council should also be represented on the central committee, and if there was a general wish that the President of the Local Government Board should nominate a few additional members, so that some persons of experience not connected with a particular borough or union might be added to the committee, he would be willing to nominate a few members accordingly.

It is important, however, that the numbers of the central committee should be kept within reasonable limits, and it is considered that whilst the number of the representatives of each joint committee should not exceed two, there would be advantage in the number being limited to one.

The President is prepared to arrange for the convening of the first meeting of the central committee when constituted. He should be furnished in the case of each joint committee with the names and addresses of their representatives on the central committee.

7. It would be the function of the central committee to act as the advisers and guides of the joint committees, and as controllers for the whole of London, so as to secure as far as possible a common policy throughout the whole metropolis. The central committee would be in constant communication with the joint committees, would gather and distribute information as to employment, and would administer the funds entrusted to them. They would deal as far as possible with cases of the unemployed in any borough for whom employment could not be found by the joint committee of that borough, and who were referred to them by that committee.

They would endeavour to arrange for the execution of larger works extending beyond the limits of any particular borough, would send men to labour colonies where practicable, etc.

8. It is hoped that the funds of the central committee would be largely furnished by means of subscriptions from private persons and others, but

they would in all probability in the course of the winter require contributions in addition from the borough councils. It is suggested that these should be based on the assessable value of the borough, and in this way the cost would be spread uniformly over the metropolis.

The Local Government Board would be prepared, where necessary, to sanction such contributions to the central committee by the borough councils under the Local Authorities (Expenses) Act, 1887.

9. In the selection of men to whom employment should be given, it would be important that the joint committees should act on uniform principles. The central committee would, no doubt, frame rules for the guidance of the joint committees, but one or two points may be mentioned here.

(*a*) A joint committee should only deal with cases in which distress is due to lack of employment. All other cases (including those of a chronic nature, whether due to lack of employment or not) should be left to the guardians and the ordinary charitable agencies.

(*b*) Persons of bad character (drunkards, etc.) should not be dealt with.

(*c*) Preference should be given to persons who have established homes with wives and families.

(*d*) The work provided should as far as possible be continuous for some definite time.

(*e*) Unless the circumstances are very exceptional, employment should only be found by the joint committee if the applicant has resided six months in the borough. If he has resided for six months in London, but not in the borough, his case, if otherwise suitable, might be referred to the central committee.

(*f*) No employment should be given until the home has been visited on behalf of the joint committee.

(*g*) In distributing work amongst the applicants, regard should be had as far as possible to their previous occupations.

10. It is earnestly desired that every care should be

exercised to sift the applications made, and that all possible precautions should be taken to limit the cases dealt with to those of actual necessity in which the circumstances are such that they can properly be dealt with on the lines above indicated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD,
29th October, 1994.

INTERIM REPORT OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE LONDON UNEMPLOYED FUND, JANUARY 4TH, 1905, ISSUED BY MR. ALDERMAN ALLISTON (CHAIRMAN) AND THE REV. H. RUSSELL WAKEFIELD (VICE-CHAIRMAN).

MR. LONG in his scheme defined our duties. We were first of all to advise the joint committees formed in the various boroughs, so as to secure as far as possible a common policy in connection with the provision of work for the unemployed throughout the whole metropolis. We have endeavoured to do this by suggesting to the joint committees methods by inquiry and classification of those out of work. We have also kept prominently before the various districts that it was Mr. Long's wish that as far as possible work should be found in the different localities, and that only those unemployed who could not be thus dealt with should be sent on to the central committee.

The co-operation of the joint committees has been of a most willing character, with the result that at least 2,000 persons have already been given regular or partial employment in the various boroughs. The central committee have also expressed readiness to subsidise by means of a contribution towards the extra cost incurred by any borough undertaking at this time

new work which otherwise would not be dealt with until a later date. We may here mention that we have decided upon the establishment of what may be called a Central Labour Exchange, which shall be in communication with the various labour bureaux, and where employers and employed may be placed in connection one with the other. We believe that this will be very useful, and we look forward to its being associated with the provinces as well as London.

A small sub-committee is also being formed for the consideration of a careful scheme for the emigration of suitable men.

The next part of Mr. Long's instructions was that we were to deal, as far as possible, with cases of the unemployed for whom work could not be found by the borough joint committees. In order to effect this, we have opened communication with the Government departments and with every central authority in the metropolis, and the results are encouraging. It is true that we are only now beginning to send out any considerable number of workmen, but from this date there will be a steady increase in the total. The following arrangements have been definitely made:—

(1) At Hadleigh Farm Colony 200 men will now be employed for continuous monthly periods through the agency of the Salvation Army.

(2) The Asylums Committee of the London County Council have provided facilities for the employment of about 1,000 men on their estate at Long Grove, Epsom, for three months. The first 100 began work on Monday, and the numbers will be increased as rapidly as possible.

(3) Opportunities have also been provided by the London County Council's Parks and other committees for the employment of about 900 men in unskilled labour in various parts of the metropolis.

(4) The Markets Committee of the City Corporation have made arrangements for the employment for some months of a large number of men recommended by the committee.

(5) We are negotiating with the Garden City, near Hitchin, for work for some 200 men.

The public will, of course, desire to know the payment to be received by our workers. Roughly speaking, it may be put down at 25s. per week per man, and we estimate that the arrangements already entered into will involve the employment of 2,500 men for a period of about ten weeks. This expenditure, with railway fares, provision in some cases of clothing, etc., will absorb practically the whole of the £35,000 which had been subscribed up to the present. We have great hopes that very soon Mr. Fels' 1,300 acres will be at our disposal. In order to develop our scheme in regard to this land, and in order to extend our operations in other directions, the continued and most generous support of the public will be required.

LONDON UNEMPLOYED FUND, 1904–5. REPORT OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 10TH, 1905.

THIS report describes the work of the organisation of central and local committees set up in London last winter by the President of the Local Government Board to deal with the question of the genuine unemployed. It contains an account of various works in London and the country upon which some 3,500 men were employed, besides those assisted by grants in aid of special municipal work. It also describes an agricultural training colony at Hollesley Bay, and a Central Employment Exchange for bringing employers and employed together all over London. It thus contains the experiences of a large representative committee in dealing for twelve months with the problem in its various branches. On all these points, and others to which the task of administration gives rise, the report should prove not only a record of the work done, but also a guide and help to those entrusted with the administration of the Unemployed Workmen Act, and to all who are interested in the problem.

P. S. King & Son, Orchard House, Westminster. Price 1s. net (post free 1s. 3d.).

toward bringing together the poor of Philadelphia and some of the unused land.

In 1903 two hundred and seventy-five acres of such land was put to profitable use, providing partial employment for more than 3,600 persons. One hundred and ninety-nine acres was within the corporate limits of the city and seventy-six acres in New Jersey. Working the Philadelphia land were 768 families, consisting of 3,609 persons, cultivating quarter-acre gardens, some a little less and some a little more, and 140 orphan and school children cultivating gardens of about one-sixteenth of an acre each. About nine acres in the city were cultivated by employed labour, as a co-operative farm. This latter furnished work for a considerable portion of the year to more than twenty people, largely men and women in great want, some of them not knowing when they came for work whence the next meal would come. A few worked two or three days a week during the most of the year, others worked regularly the whole summer, while still others worked only a day or two and were seen no more. Some were typical specimens of the tramp.

The seventy-six acres cultivated in New Jersey were all used in a co-operative way. The tract of land consisted of a ninety-six acre farm, well improved, situated about five miles south-east of the city of Trenton. Running through this farm is the Trenton and New Brunswick Railway, along which tramps are passing almost daily. Mr. Bolton Hall, of New York, who kindly loaned the farm to the association, did so believing that if these people were given profitable and pleasant employment and their freedom, this would, in a large measure, stop their tramping. It was also believed that the thriftier ones among our vacant lot gardeners in Philadelphia would be induced to take small tracts and become permanent home owners thereon. Both the location and the season were much against a successful demonstration of these ideas. It was the first of May before the work began, and for five weeks the weather was so dry that it was

almost impossible to do any ploughing or other preparatory work necessary to planting the crop. Then it rained so incessantly for two weeks that we were brought almost to the first of July before the work could be gotten even fairly under way. The crop was almost a failure; still much good has been accomplished. Many of the gardeners were more than willing to take the small holdings if they could be helped with sufficient funds to build a house or sufficient employment to guarantee a living until a start could be made. Dozens of men and boys applied for work, most of whom proved to be faithful and willing. Two young Bulgarians just arrived in this country with no friends or acquaintances, and unable to speak a word of our language, were among the first to come. They are both now employed in a New York hotel as bakers at fairly good wages, and have learned to speak our language fairly well. The farm furnished employment to more than thirty people during the season, many of whom were as greatly benefited as those instanced above.

We expended during the year in that particular work $925.13, as follows:—

Wages for labour performed	...$366.42
For horses and tools	... 218.76
Seeds and plants	... 116.85
Fertilisers	... 132.80
Feed for the horses	... 97.10
	$925.13

In the Philadelphia work we have expended this season a total of $4,837.27. Of this sum $764.51 was paid into the treasury from sales of vegetables from the co-operative farms, from sales of tools and seeds and fertilisers to the gardeners, and from the sale of horses previously purchased by the association.

In return for these expenditures the gardeners have taken home or sold from their little plots vegetables and other products to the value of not less than

$36,000. On the co-operative farm of nine acres in Philadelphia we expended for all purposes—wages, seeds, tools, fertilisers and labour—more than we have paid into the association's treasury from the proceeds of vegetables sold therefrom. This is the only year since this feature of the work was taken up that there was not a surplus from this source.

For each dollar contributed to the Philadelphia Vacant Lots Cultivation Association in 1903 the beneficiaries for whom it was spent, had, by adding to it their own labour, which otherwise would have been wasted, nearly eight dollars' worth of produce. For each dollar paid in poor rates to a city the beneficiaries seldom get over fifty cents' worth of actual aid. This is of vast importance to taxpayers and city officials charged with municipal responsibilities, as well as to philanthropists.

Some may be rather sceptical as to the statements made, especially in regard to the large returns for the small expenditures, but they should consider that our market is next door to the gardens, and the gardener does his own marketing. His produce is fresh and of the highest quality, and he gets the highest retail price. He gets his fertilisers for next to nothing, as there are thousands of tons of good manure and street sweepings annually thrown into the dumps, which can be had merely for the asking. The market gardener ten miles from the city ships to the commission merchants, gets the wholesale price, out of which he pays commission and freight. To the farmer in the city not only is this saved, but the market gardener ten miles or more from the city would pay at least $1.50 per ton for all the manure used, and if he applied it at the rate of forty to sixty tons per acre (which he must do to grow the finest crops) that item of expense alone makes a good profit in favour of the city farmer.

The association solicits contributions from the charitable only sufficient to pay for superintendence, ploughing, seeds, fertilisers, and incidental expenses,

Comparative Statement of Results, 1897—1903.

Year.	No. of Acres.	No. of Gardens.	No. of Persons Affected.	Total Product.	Average Product per Garden.	Total Cost to Contributors.	Cost per Garden.
1897 ...	27	100	528	$ 6,000.00	$ 60.00	$ 1,825.33	$ 18.25
1898 ...	40½	162	770	9,700.00	59.87	2,266.76	14.00
1899 ...	73	292	1,495	14,810.80	49.35	2,650.30	9.07
1900 ...	130	520	2,386	24,600.00	47.30	3,962.48	7.62
1901 ...	158	632	2,946	30,000.00	47.46	4,480.94	7.09
1902 ...	198½	794	3,775	50,000.00	62.80	5,556.80	7.00
1903 ...	275	768	3,609	36,000.00	47.00	4,837.27	6.16

Note.—The figures for 1903 do not include the expenditures and receipts of the Trenton Farm.

The gardeners do the rest and get the proceeds either by sale or through the use in their homes of the products; and since they get all that they make, the more intelligently and industriously they work the larger their income. A failure means the loss of time and opportunity. This brings out all their better nature and best efforts. It is a first-rate business school for the unemployed. They learn quickly how to get much money out of little ground. The out-of-door work makes them feel of some account in the world. It develops hope in minds that are almost lost in despair. There are thousands who are desperate on account of poverty due to the want of opportunity; it reclaims such men.

To land-owners the Vacant Lots Cultivation Association, in substance, says: Lend us your idle land (subject to immediate dispossession whenever required) and we will offer ample self-help to all who cannot work in usual employments. We will leave the land (on demand) in better condition than we find it. We will make of it something even better than a park or playground for the poor, or rather we will show them how to make not only parks and playgrounds for themselves but productive gardens as well out of what are now only idle lots and in many cases rubbish heaps. We will help to make the city beautiful while making this idle land and these idle people useful.

R. F. POWELL.

APPENDIX VII.

THE BEST LABOUR COLONY IN GERMANY —LÜHLERHEIM.

By G. P. Gooch, M.A.

On entering Germany from Holland, the first labour colony you will come to is Lühlerheim, some ten miles distant from Wesel. You are there not far from the western boundary of Westphalia, that land of lofty chimneys and belching furnaces, in which the industrial life of Germany centres. A little to the north lies the Roman Catholic colony of Maria Veen. These harbours of refuge remind one of military hospitals to which the stricken and wounded are brought in from the fierce combat that is always raging around.

Our first glimpse of Lühlerheim on turning off the road which we had followed for nearly an hour from the railway station was prepossessing. The approach to the buildings was prettily laid out, and the bright-hued flowers seemed to extend a welcome to new-comers. A moment more, and we were shaking hands with Hausvater Siemon. I do not think any of us is likely to forget that noble man. Before coming to Lühlerheim, some five years ago, he had long been at the head of the farming work at the Rauhe Haus, near Hamburg, that famous creation of Wichern, to which the Inner Mission traces its origin, and the history of which forms one of the most fascinating chapters in the redemptive work of the nineteenth century. The square, thick-set figure, the

open face, and kind, keen eyes, suggested a nature of mingled strength and tenderness; and when we saw him with the colonists we knew that the face did not belie the man. The labour colony system depends for its success on the character of the Hausvater; and we felt instinctively that the institution of which our new friend was the guiding spirit must be as admirable in practice as in theory.

The country round Lühlerheim somewhat resembles parts of Norfolk, and makes no pretence to beauty; the colony is planted on land of such little value that the original purchase was effected for £2 an acre. It is now eighteen years old, and additional land has been bought at a rather higher price. We walked out to see a number of the colonists reclaiming the virgin soil. As we watched them working cheerily away, digging and draining the land, one felt that a task had been found that added to the wealth of the country not less than to the physical and spiritual health of the worker. Reclamation of the soil and the cultivation of the land employs the greater number of the men. At the time of our visit all the colonists were employed within the bounds of the estate; but in winter, when the numbers rise to more than two hundred, many are hired by neighbouring landowners within a distance of not more than an hour's walk to reclaim the soil.

The less stalwart members of the community find work indoors in the innumerable duties that fall to be performed in a colony that is made as nearly as possible self-sufficing. When the colony is full, about sixty men are thus employed in what may be called domestic work. A third occupation requiring less labour than either the farm or the domestic work, is that of looking after the very considerable quantity of stock. The finances of the colony depend to such a large extent on the success of this department that two experienced men are in control; but the less responsible work among the animals is performed by the colonists themselves. The good Hausvater showed

us with special pride a large and handsome building which had recently been erected for the cattle entirely by the labour of colonists working under his own supervision. The buildings devoted to the pigs were very imperfectly ventilated; but this state of things seemed to affect them less than their visitors, for the animals looked in prime condition and bring in about £1,500 a year to the colony.

We were fresh from our visit to the Belgian colonies, and the change of atmosphere was like coming out of a vault into the light of day. However the colonists differ from one another, they are alike in one particular. Every man is there by his own free will. From time to time a man will be sent or at any rate strongly urged by some individual or society to enter a colony; but in such a case he is asked to sign a paper declaring that it is also his own wish that he should be there. This fundamental principle of voluntaryism pervades the entire work. The colony is what Canon Barnett would call a school of freedom, not a school of restraint. There is no more compulsion to remain than to enter. Those to whom clothes are supplied are bound to stay at least six weeks, in order to earn at least part of their value. After that time, the man who does not find the life to his taste is free to go. Some will no doubt say that this is a flaw in the system. To the Hausvater it appears indispensable, and he spoke of it to me as the foundation on which the entire scheme rests. The one chance of a man of the usual type of colonist retaining or regaining his self-respect is to be able to feel that he is not a prisoner or a convict, but that he has come to a place where honest men may live and work without shame and without reproach. Everyone who seeks admission to the colony knows that he will have to work; but judging by the faces of the men, they seemed to relish their tasks. There are no absolute limits in the dietary, and the men eat as much as they want. It is needless to say that no alcohol ever appears in the colony.

Work is the great schoolmaster at Lühlerheim; but its lessons are reinforced by those of leisure. The men are encouraged to make their spare time pleasant and profitable, and the varied talent that flows into the colony is utilised for dramatic and musical performances and in many other ways; the volumes in the lending library seemed to be carefully chosen—of novels only a few, and those the best—and, according to our guide, are eagerly read. If a colonist possesses some special gift, he is encouraged to use it. The large dining-room, which also serves as the chapel, is adorned with exquisite drawings of the evangelists by a colonist whose talent would ensure him a handsome income in the outside world could he but stand against the temptation of drink.

And, finally, the religious influence is quietly but unobtrusively at work. In Lühlerheim each man is regarded as an individual, and as far as possible treated individually; for it is one of the features of the labour colony system that no community should be so large that the Hausvater cannot know the details of every case under his charge. The Hausvater was fully persuaded that the absence of constraint which prevails in the daily life of his large family should apply equally in the things of the soul. There was a noticeable absence of texts and of the external reminders of religion throughout the buildings; and the large sitting or recreation room was entirely fitted with portraits of the heroes of German history. Everyone must attend morning and evening prayers, which are read by the Hausvater, and service on Sunday, when a neighbouring clergyman comes at frequent intervals to preach. But no one is questioned as to his beliefs, and it is by his own choice if the conversation ever turns on the subject. At the great festivals of the Christian year communion is administered; and those who desire to be present give notice to the Hausvater a day or two before. A considerable number of the men take advantage of the opportunity, and the Hausvater told me that it is in the

little talk with each man as he comes to announce his intention that he finds the best occasion to speak to him of his life, and his temptations, and his future, and to break down the barrier of shyness and pride which locks his lips.

In asking and answering the question what result Lühlerheim produces, we must bear in mind the class of men by whom it is frequented. The German colony system is in no sense an instrument for dealing with the genuine unemployed. If it ever made such a claim, it makes it no longer. The workman of good character and normal physique who falls out of work looks for aid and rarely looks in vain to local assistance. If he is a good workman, his town will help him in his temporary difficulty, and the State is waiting for him with a pension when he grows old. But it is well known that the greater number of men who pass throughout the labour colonies have been in prison, and that only a small percentage of those who leave find their way into permanent situations. These two facts make it pretty clear that the men who use the colonies are an inferior class—what the Germans call "minderwertig"—inferior in bodily strength, in technical efficiency, in moral balance, or in all of them together. But such men are not to be confounded with the criminal class. Though nearly two-thirds of the 474 men who entered Lühlerheim last year have been in prison, begging accounted for nearly half, and only twenty-nine had been guilty of serious offences. The evidence of figures is confirmed by the emphatic testimony of the Hausvater. A few are sent away from time to time for idleness or other reasons; but the conduct of the men he declared to be exemplary, adding that he should be quite happy about his wife if he was compelled to leave her for a time in the colony without any members of the staff.

In a word, the colonists whom we saw in Lühlerheim belonged to a class which needs removal from temptation rather than punishment. They have no ties outside, for the most part, for scarcely more than 10 per

cent. of the colonists are married. Inside the fold they live useful, industrious, and cheerful lives; outside they fall a prey to their own weaknesses, or to the stress and struggle of industrial life. The majority of the men had been in Lühlerheim or some other colony before, often several times; and on the day of our visit a man who always leaves the colony in the harvest season returned for his usual winter sojourn. The abolition of the rule limiting the stay to two years is not only a merciful concession to the weaklings, but a recognition of the exact economic function of a colony in the social structure. It is, of course, a form of relief, for no colony is self-supporting. But the working expenses of Lühlerheim and its fellows are trifling; and if it fails to provide its members with strength to stand alone in the world, it is at any rate the means of preventing them from falling lower.[1]

The German labour colony system stands in such close relation to the entire system of registration, poor relief, and the vagrancy laws that its adaptability to England could not be fruitfully discussed except in connection with a comprehensive plan of dealing with the unemployable, both criminal and otherwise. But without entering on this wider theme, my visit to Lühlerheim convinced me that the establishment of similar colonies in England under the direction of men like Hausvater Siemon, fired with the love of God and man, would be the cheapest and most hopeful method of dealing with the class of men who are weak but not wicked, and who, so long as they are condemned to engage in a struggle for which they are not fitted, drag down the men of stronger calibre, and supply recruits to the criminal classes.

[1] For articles on other colonies see *The Friend* for Oct. 14th, 1904.

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